

News Release - May 5, 1999

## **Presidential Blue Ribbon Panel Recommends Actions to Address Sprawl, Climate Change, and Corporate Environmental Responsibility**

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In its third and final report to President Clinton, The President's Council on Sustainable Development today recommended 140 actions that will improve our economy, protect our environment, and improve our quality of life. Many of these actions address important current issues like sprawl, climate change, urban renewal, and corporate environmental responsibility.

The Council, a panel of leaders from business, government and non-profit organizations, was formed to advise the White House on ways to integrate economic goals with environmental and social goals. The Council has worked collaboratively for six years, and held more than 40 public meetings and workshops in communities around the country.

"Our challenge is to create a future in which prosperity and opportunity increase while life flourishes and pressures on the Earth diminish," said Ray Anderson, Chairman and CEO of Atlanta-based Interface, Inc. and Council co-chair. "Fortunately, people, companies, and communities are working together like never before to find solutions that work. This report draws a blueprint for making our future both economically prosperous and environmentally healthy."

"We have set out a vision of a sustainable America in terms of concrete ideas, examples of success, and proposals for national policy," said Jonathan Lash, President of the World Resources Institute and Council co-chair. "From creative ways to eliminate pollution to mortgages that fight sprawl, this report reflects the dialogue learning and eventual consensus the President's Council of Sustainable Development has built around innovative ideas."

Tapping into a recent groundswell of public concern over issues it examined, the Council today presented its consensus report, *Towards a Sustainable America: Advancing Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the 21st Century*, to President Clinton. The report offers over 50 immediate actions to create jobs, protect the climate and public health, and save money in the short- and long-run; it advocates 34 specific actions to push environmental management reforms beyond current programs to create better corporate bottom lines, build partnerships with communities, and improve environmental protection; it recommends over 40 bold, systematic and specific steps for all levels of government, businesses, community organizations and citizens who are building more livable communities.

The recommended actions include: Pursuing "smart growth" strategies that link development decisions with quality of life and capitalizing on market factors. Giving homebuyers financial incentive to buy near transportation hubs through location efficient

mortgages. Encouraging the renewal of aging cities by experimenting with Individual Development Accounts, a means to build wealth for the poor and low income by matching savings with funds from other sources like foundations or corporations. Testing audit and certification program where federal and state agencies provide more operational flexibility and faster regulatory decisions for high performing companies. The need for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and incentives and credit for those actions.

Dr. Linn Draper, Jr., Chairman, President, and CEO, American Electric Power, remarking on the Council's recommendations on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, said, "We cannot make progress quickly enough without meaningful incentives. We must create opportunities to learn by doing. Like Americans have so often done before when we face great challenges, we get the best people, apply sweat and commitment, and we can make a difference."

Scott Bernstein, President of the Center for Neighborhood Technology, notes that "The public's appetite for good jobs and healthy communities is growing rapidly. These recommendations will help put the place back into marketplace. They are a roadmap for achieving smart growth for all communities, expanding markets in a cleaner and greener environment, and supporting the network of open spaces and natural areas we need to survive."

The PCSD released the report on the final day of its National Town Meeting for a Sustainable America (NTM), held in Detroit, Michigan and points across America May 2-5, 1999. The meeting brought together over 3,000 people in Detroit and more than 75,000 in 100+ events across the country. The NTM program showcased best practices in sustainability, and helped highlight the relevance and importance of the Council's recommendations.

The PCSD is a presidentially-appointed panel of leaders from U.S. businesses, environmental and citizen organizations, Native American groups, and local and federal government officials.

The Council is charged with advising President Clinton on strategies to achieve prosperity, opportunity, and a healthy environment, and is the only presidential or federal advisory panel charged with recommending policies across the full spectrum of economic, environmental, and social policy issues. The Council has issued several reports on sustainable development and has successfully fostered many local and regional efforts to achieve a better future. All reports are available on the Council's web site, /PCSD