

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY GOVERNOR JIM FLORIO
EAGLETON CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
FRIDAY, MAY 18, 1990

GOOD MORNING.

THANK YOU MICHAEL FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION.

I'M ALSO THANKFUL FOR THE CHANCE TO ADDRESS A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE AS CONCERNED AS I AM THAT WE IN NEW JERSEY KEEP OUR AIR CLEAN AND OUR WATER PURE. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ISSUES SUCH AS POLLUTION CONTROL, WASTE REDUCTION, AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO THIS MORNING, BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR DISCUSSIONS, IS OFFER SOME SUGGESTIONS OF MY OWN AS TO WHERE WE SHOULD FOCUS OUR ATTENTION.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT STANDS AT THE BRINK OF A GREAT PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

DESPITE THE BEST EFFORTS OF SOME IN GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY IN WASHINGTON, DURING THE 1980'S TO PRETEND THAT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS DO NOT EXIST, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE OVERWHELMINGLY REJECTED THAT NOTION. EVERY POLL AND EVERY ELECTION RETURN CARRIES THE SAME MESSAGE: PEOPLE ARE SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE TO MAKE THE FINANCIAL INVESTMENT NOW TO PROTECT THE FUTURE.

THEY KNOW THE REAL KEY QUESTION IS NOT WHAT WILL IT COST TODAY TO CLEAN UP -- BUT WHAT WILL IT COST TOMORROW IF WE DO NOTHING?

THE REJECTION OF THE DO NOTHING ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH OF THE '80S IS HEARTENING, BUT IT ALSO PRESENTS A CHALLENGE. THE 90S IS THE DECADE WE WILL BE CALLED UPON TO PROVE THAT WE CAN DELIVER. WE MUST DELIVER WATER WE CAN DRINK AND SWIM IN, AIR WE CAN BREATHE HEALTHFULLY, A PLANET THAT WILL REMAIN SAFE -- CLEAN AND GREEN -- FOR OUR CHILDREN.

I REMEMBER THE LAST EAGLETON CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT. IT WAS IN 1987. I WAS IN CONGRESS AND SPOKE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL GRIDLOCK. WE ALL WANTED TO KNOW WHY STRONG CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS OF THE LATE 70S AND 80S -- THINGS LIKE SUPERFUND, CLEAN AIR, THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY ACT -- WERE NOT DOING ALL THAT WE HOPED. THE ANSWER WAS SIMPLE -- LACK OF WILL.

FORTUNATELY, THINGS HAVE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY SINCE THAT CONFERENCE. AND A CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE HAS FORCED POLITICIANS TO FACE THE NEED FOR EVEN TOUGHER LAWS. SOME OF THE TOOLS WE PUT IN PLACE ARE WORKING AS WE HOPED. COMMUNITY RIGHT

TO KNOW PUTS INFORMATION ABOUT POLLUTION IN THE HANDS OF PEOPLE, WHO THEN DEMAND CHANGE.

THERE IS STILL SO MUCH THAT WE CAN DO ON A STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN SMALL PART OF THE PLANET.

ALREADY IN NEW JERSEY WE HAVE MADE A GOOD BEGINNING -- AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROSECUTOR, THE CLEAN WATER ENFORCEMENT ACT, THE SOLID WASTE TASK FORCE, THE TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL, AND OTHER RECENT INITIATIVES. I PROMISED TO TAKE THESE STEPS AND I'M FULFILLING THOSE PROMISES.

BUT WE CAN'T RELY ONLY ON GOVERNMENT ACTION. FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE CAN OCCUR ONLY WHEN EVERYONE, COMPANIES AND PEOPLE, RECOGNIZE THE REAL COSTS OF POLLUTING AND THE REAL BENEFITS OF NOT POLLUTING. WE NEED TO CHANGE THE ECONOMIC CALCULUS SO THAT COMPANIES PREVENT POLLUTION FROM EVER OCCURRING.

I LOOK FORWARD TO THE INSIGHTS THAT WILL COME OUT OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION SENATOR DALTON WILL LEAD ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE OF POLLUTION PREVENTION.

WE'VE GOT TO PUT THE MARKETPLACE TO WORK IN ENCOURAGING POLLUTION PREVENTION.

BUT EVERY PRODUCT SHOULD REFLECT ITS TRUE COST OF PRODUCTION. BY THAT I MEAN THE EVENTUAL COST OF SAFELY DISPOSING WASTE CREATED DURING PRODUCTION OR BY THE PRODUCT ITSELF. YES, IT MAY COST MORE. BUT IT WILL BE ITS TRUE COST. AND THAT WILL BE AN INCENTIVE FOR COMPANIES TO FIND BETTER WAYS TO PREVENT POLLUTION.

THOSE THAT SUCCEED IN DISCOVERING AND USING SUCH TECHNOLOGY WILL BE REWARDED. WE'RE ALREADY SEEING THAT. ALMOST EVERY MAJOR COMPANY IN THE STATE THAT USES SOLVENTS HAS INSTALLED EQUIPMENT TO RECYCLE THOSE DANGEROUS CHEMICALS, OR FIGURED OUT WAYS TO AVOID USING THEM.

OF COURSE IT IS NOT ONLY CORPORATIONS WHICH POLLUTE. WE ALL DO. WE DON'T RECYCLE AS MUCH AS WE CAN. SO, WE CAN USE THE MARKET TO ENCOURAGE GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL LIFESTYLES AT HOME. NEW JERSEY HAS ONE OF THE NATION'S STRONGEST AND FASTEST GROWING RECYCLING INDUSTRIES. THAT MEANS JOBS AND PROFITS. AND THAT WILL BE AN INCENTIVE TO KEEP ON RECYCLING.

ANOTHER MARKETPLACE WE NEED TO USE, IS THE MARKETPLACE OF PUBLIC OPINION. COMPANIES ARE FINALLY REALIZING THAT THEY WILL BE HURT IN THE LONG RUN IF PEOPLE VIEW THEM AS POLLUTERS. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH BUSINESS EXXON HAS LOST SINCE THE VALDEZ OIL SPILL, BUT I KNOW THEY'VE LOST A LOT OF RESPECT.

TO MAKE SURE PEOPLE AREN'T BAMBOOZLED BY WORDS, WE NEED TO VIGOROUSLY PURSUE POLICIES THAT KEEP PEOPLE TRULY AWARE. THE COMMUNITY RIGHT TO KNOW ACT IS ONE WAY THAT SEEMS TO WORK. FOR

EXAMPLE, I HEARD AN INTERESTING STORY ABOUT A NEW JERSEY COMPANY. THEY WERE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT THEIR NEIGHBORS WOULD THINK OF THEIR EMISSION OF THE GAS, PHOSGENE, WHICH WAS A KEY INGREDIENT IN WORLD WAR I POISON GASES. SO THEY CUT EMISSIONS ALL THE WAY TO ZERO.

YOU MIGHT ASK, WHY DIDN'T THEY DO IT BEFORE. THE ANSWER IS: THERE WAS NO PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE. AND NO PUBLIC PRESSURE.

A FINAL MAJOR PLACE WE CAN PURSUE POLLUTION PREVENTION ISN'T IN THE MARKETPLACE AT ALL, BUT IN THE COURTROOM. THERE NEED TO BE STIFF PENALTIES FOR THOSE WHO DO POLLUTE. NO ONE SHOULD THINK THEY CAN "THROW AWAY AND GET AWAY."

LET'S GO BACK EVEN FURTHER IN TIME THAN THE LAST EAGLETON CONFERENCE, TO THE FIRST EARTH DAY IN 1970. I REMEMBER THE FIRST EARTH DAY WELL. IT CAME AT A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY IN OUR NATION. WE BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT SMOKESTACKS WEREN'T LEADING TO INEVITABLE PROGRESS, BUT TO SLOW DEATH. THAT MORE CHEMICALS DIDN'T NECESSARILY MEAN THE EASY LIFE, JUST MORE COMPLICATED PROBLEMS.

ON APRIL 22, 1970 THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT TOOK SHAPE AS A POLITICAL FORCE. WITHIN A YEAR THE EPA WAS ESTABLISHED, AND WE HAD OUR FIRST CLEAN AIR ACT.

WITH THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THAT FIRST EARTH DAY WE'VE TAKEN ON A NEW CHALLENGE. A CHALLENGE WHERE WE STOP TRYING TO CONQUER THE FORCES OF NATURE AND ACCOMPLISH THE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TASK OF LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THEM. A CHALLENGE TOWARDS WHICH WE ALL MUST WORK -- AT HOME, IN GOVERNMENT AND IN INDUSTRY. AND WHEN WE MEET THAT CHALLENGE OUR LIVES WON'T BE LESS ENJOYABLE, RATHER LIFE WILL BE MORE ENJOYABLE FOR ALL.

WE WILL HAVE CREATED A SOCIETY THAT INSTINCTIVELY PREVENTS POLLUTION. STRONG ENFORCEMENT OF OUR LAWS IS NEEDED TO CLEAN UP THE MESSSES WE'VE ALREADY MADE. BUT NOW WE NEED TO FOCUS ON HOW TO AVOID SUCH PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE.

THE GOAL IS A CLEANER, GREENER NEW JERSEY. ONE THAT WE CAN ENJOY AND PROSPER IN THE FUTURE AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST.