

**STATEMENT BY  
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U.S. EPA ADMINISTRATOR**

**ON  
FINDINGS BY  
EPA'S BLUE RIBBON MTBE PANEL**

July 26, 1999

On November 30, 1998, I appointed a Blue Ribbon Panel of leading experts to investigate concerns raised by the discovery of MTBE, a gasoline additive, in some water supplies. I want to congratulate and thank each member of the Panel for their excellent work, beginning with the Chairman, Dr. Daniel Greenbaum of the Health Effects Institute of Cambridge, MA.

The Panel is expected to recognize the significant benefits of reduced auto emissions and improved air quality from cleaner burning gasoline and the role oxygenates, like MTBE and ethanol have played. But the Panel is expected to conclude that when gasoline leaks and spills from sources such as underground storage tanks and gas cans, MTBE can, in fact, pose risks to water supplies.

I stated when the Panel was assembled that my goal was to protect public health and the environment by ensuring that Americans have both cleaner air and cleaner water – and never one at the expense of the other. And that is what EPA intends to do.

The recommendations I am receiving from the Panel confirm EPA's belief that we must begin to significantly reduce the use of MTBE in gasoline as quickly as possible without sacrificing the gains we've made in achieving cleaner air.

EPA is committed to working with Congress to provide a targeted legislative solution that maintains our air quality gains and allows for the reduction of MTBE, while preserving the important role of renewable fuels like ethanol.

In addition, EPA will improve gasoline leak protection and remediation programs and provide the states with maximum flexibility under current law that will make it easier to voluntarily reduce MTBE and use cleaner gasolines with other additives.

These actions will ensure that millions of Americans will continue to breathe healthier air in their communities while also receiving improved protection of their water supplies.

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