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PRESIDENT CLINTON AND VICE PRESIDENT GORE: CLEANER CARS, CLEANER AIR, HEALTHIER KIDS

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Today, President Clinton will announce the boldest steps in a generation to improve air quality and protect public health by reducing pollution from cars and other vehicles. The new measures will produce cleaner fuels and will significantly strengthen tailpipe emission standards for cars, sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and light-duty trucks. Over the coming decade, these measures will cut smog-causing pollution from new vehicles by 77 to 95 percent while preserving consumers' ability to drive the car of their choice. When fully implemented, they will provide cleaner air for all Americans, each year preventing 4,300 premature deaths, 260,000 asthma attacks among children, and 173,000 cases of childhood respiratory illness.

New Clean Air Challenges. Since the Clean Air Act was enacted in 1970, air pollution has been cut more than 30 percent even as America's

economic output has more than doubled. Since 1993, 43 million Americans now live in communities that meet federal air quality standards. And new steps by the Clinton-Gore Administration, including the toughest soot and smog standards ever, will bring cleaner air to millions more. Yet these gains are threatened because Americans drive more than ever (up from 1 trillion miles a year in 1970 to 2.5 trillion in 1997) and increasingly favor higher-polluting SUV's, minivans and other light-duty trucks (now 50 percent of the new car market.)

Cleaner Cars and Cleaner Fuels for the New Century. To keep America on track to meet its air quality goals, the Environmental Protection Agency has developed new measures that will dramatically reduce vehicle emissions. These reductions will be achieved cost-effectively with available technology by coupling tighter tailpipe standards with cleaner fuel standards. The new measures, to be phased in from 2004 to 2009, will:

- For the first time ever, apply a uniform tailpipe emissions standard to passenger cars, SUVs and other light-duty trucks. The tough new standard will result in cars that are 77 percent cleaner -- and light-duty trucks up to 95 percent cleaner -- than today's models.
- Reduce average sulfur levels in gasoline by 90 percent, from nearly 300 to 30 parts per million. These reductions are needed because sulfur fouls catalytic converters, the units that remove pollutants from auto exhaust.

When fully implemented in 2030, these new measures will reduce auto emissions of nitrogen oxides (a key component of smog) by 74 percent, and soot by 80 percent -- equivalent to removing 164 million cars from