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**CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION ACTS TO
ELIMINATE MTBE, BOOST ETHANOL**

WASHINGTON, March 20, 2000 -- EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner and Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today announced actions by the Clinton-Gore Administration to significantly reduce or eliminate use of the fuel additive MTBE and boost the use of safe alternatives like ethanol. The Clinton-Gore Administration is taking these actions in order to protect drinking water, preserve clean-air benefits, and promote greater production and use of renewable fuels like ethanol.

Browner and Glickman released a legislative framework to encourage immediate Congressional action to reduce or eliminate MTBE and promote renewable fuels like ethanol. Browner also announced the beginning of regulatory action by EPA to eliminate MTBE in gasoline.

The legislative framework being sent to Congress includes the following three recommendations, which taken together as a single package, provide an environmentally sound and cost effective approach:

- **First, Congress should amend the Clean Air Act to provide the authority to significantly reduce or eliminate the use of MTBE.** This step is necessary to protect America's drinking water supplies.
- **Second, as MTBE use is reduced or eliminated, Congress must ensure that air quality gains are not diminished.** The Clinton-Gore Administration is deeply committed to providing Americans with clean air and clean water.
- **Third, Congress should replace the existing oxygenate requirement in the Clean Air Act with a renewable fuel standard for all gasoline.** By preserving and promoting continued growth in renewable fuels, particularly ethanol, this step will increase farm income, create jobs in rural America, improve our energy security, and help protect the environment.

"Threats posed by MTBE to water supplies in many areas of the country are a growing concern," Browner said. "Action by Congress is the fastest and best way to address this problem. We need to begin now to eliminate MTBE from gasoline and move to safer alternatives, like ethanol because Americans deserve both clean air and clean water -- and never one at the expense of the other."

"These principles provide a strong, unified framework for promoting the continued growth of renewable fuels like ethanol," said Glickman. "Ethanol will play an important role in ensuring that we maintain the air quality gains we have achieved to date, and the renewable fuels standard will encourage substantial new growth in the use of ethanol and other renewable fuels across the country. That's good news for our farmers, for our energy security, and for the environment."

In addition to the legislative framework, Browner also announced that EPA today formally began regulatory action to eliminate or phase down MTBE, issuing an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking under Section 6 of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

"To ensure that our water supplies will be protected, I am also directing EPA to take an additional insurance policy by starting a regulatory process aimed at phasing out MTBE," Browner added. "However, this action can require time to complete; that is why it is in the best interest of the American people for Congress to take quick action now."

Section 6 of the Toxic Substances Control Act gives EPA authority to ban, phase out, limit or control the manufacture of any chemical substance deemed to pose an unreasonable risk to the public or the environment. EPA expects to issue a full proposal to ban or phase down MTBE within six months, after which more time is required by the law for analysis and public comment before a final action can be taken.