Browner Announces New EPA Offices to Support Children's Health, Regulatory Reinvention and Right To Know

[EPA press release - February 27, 1997]

EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner today announced a restructuring to create new offices that will oversee three of the Agency's highest policy priorities: protecting children from environmental health threats, reinventing environmental regulation to achieve better results at less cost, and expanding the public's access to information about local pollution.

"The Clinton Administration has worked aggressively to protect the health of our children, expand the public's right to know about harmful pollutants in our communities, and bring common sense and cost effective innovation to the environmental regulatory system to better protect the public," Browner said. "Through this restructuring we can advance our most significant initiatives by giving them new levels of support and leadership."

The new offices are:

- **The Office of Children's Health Protection.** Among its duties, this office will carry out the agenda from EPA's 1996 report, "Environmental Health Threats to Children." That agenda includes addressing a wide array of complex threats to children's health, from air pollution that can exacerbate asthma to toxic chemicals that can lead to serious health problems. It also includes expanding the family's right to know about environmental issues affecting children.

  Dr. Philip Landrigan will help lead this effort as the Senior Advisor to the Administrator for Children's Health. A full-time Staff Director also will be named soon. Landrigan, who is chairman of the Department of Community Medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, helped produce the 1993 study by the National Academy of Sciences on pesticides and children and is co-author of the book "Raising Children Toxic Free."

- **The Office of Reinvention,** as part of its duties, will implement the action items in "Reinventing Environmental Regulation," the report issued by President Clinton and Vice President Gore in 1995. These efforts will include the Common Sense Initiative, under which goals are achieved on an industry-by-industry basis, rather than pollutant-by-pollutant; and Project XL, which invites regulated industrial facilities or government jurisdictions to develop their own ways to achieve environmental goals in exchange for superior environmental performance. The new office will also coordinate reinvention efforts across the Agency.

  J. Charles Fox will be Associate Administrator for the Office of Reinvention. Fox was previously Assistant Secretary and Chief Operating Officer of the Maryland...
Department of the Environment, and before that chief of staff for EPA's Office of Water. He also was Special Assistant to Administrator Browner.

- The Center for Environmental Information and Statistics will become operational and open to the public on Jan. 1, 1998. It continues the Clinton Administration's commitment to expand the right to know about pollution in local communities by coordinating databases across EPA. It will help fulfill a commitment made by President Clinton in a major environmental address in Kalamazoo, Michigan, last year when he called for more electronic access by the public to information about local pollution. When open, the Center will provide easy access for the public to EPA's massive environmental information resources through computers and other means. Its operation will reflect recommendations about increased public information made by the National Academy of Public Administration to compile and disseminate integrated environmental statistics and trend data that will support more effective decision making.

To ensure the timely development of the Center, a Steering Committee will oversee its development and completion. The Committee will be chaired by EPA Assistant Administrator David Gardiner and Acting Assistant Administrator Alvin M. Pesachowitz.

"Phil Landrigan is a renowned expert on environmental health and pediatrics. We are fortunate to have him lend his expertise to our efforts to protect the health of children from environmental threats," Browner said. "Chuck Fox has environmental experience at both the federal and state level and is committed to reinventing environmental regulations to achieve stronger protections with less bureaucracy and cost."

Landrigan is a graduate of Harvard Medical School and the University of London. He is a member of the President's Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses. Chuck Fox is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and has worked for several environmental organizations, including American Rivers, Friends of the Earth and the Environmental Policy Institute.

Also today, Browner announced that EPA will streamline and consolidate the office that performs outreach efforts to Congress and the office that performs outreach efforts to state and local governments within a single Office of Intergovernmental Relations.

The new offices for children and reinvention will be located within the Office of the Administrator, and the statistics center will be located within the Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation. The Agency's restructuring will be carried out within existing budgetary constraints.