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From the Gulf of Maine to the Gulf of Mexico, Americans are blessed to live amid many incredible wonders of nature.

We no longer take those wonders for granted. We understand our responsibilities to the natural world to conserve and make better what we have been given. Wetlands are among our most important natural resources. They provide a habitat for wildlife, trap pollution, reduce the impact of floods, and provide recreational opportunities.

For many years, our Nation has sought to slow the loss of our wetlands. We've made tremendous progress. And on Earth Day, I was proud to announce a new goal: Instead of just limiting our losses, we will expand the wetlands of America.

To accomplish this objective, my administration will work to restore, improve, and protect at least 3 million acres of wetlands over the next 5 years. This new wetlands policy reflects an enduring national commitment, carried forward by both parties, to protecting the environment.

We're taking action to ensure cleaner air. Since Congress passed the Clean Air Act of 1970, major air pollutants have been reduced by nearly 50 percent. My administration is building on that progress by implementing smarter ways to raise standards and improve air quality.

The clean air interstate rule, based on the Clear Skies legislation I sent to Congress last year, will reduce the major causes of ozone and fine particles by 70 percent. This rule employs a market-based approach called "cap and trade" to reduce air pollution that crosses State borders.

We're also completing an important new rule to remove sulfur from diesel fuels. Just as regulations to remove lead from gasoline have helped cut pollution in the 1970s, our new diesel rule will reduce harmful emissions from generators, tractors, and other diesel vehicles.

Finally, we are regulating mercury emissions from powerplants for the first time ever. Under our new proposal, mercury emissions will be cut by approximately 70 percent.

All these rules are based on sound science and good economics, and they will help every American breathe cleaner air.

We also have a responsibility to be good stewards of the land. Two years ago, I signed legislation to clean up more of the abandoned and polluted industrial sites known as brownfields. Between 2001 and 2003, we restored over 1,000 brownfields to usable condition, more than were restored in the previous 7 years. Our efforts have opened usable land for small businesses and residents in hundreds of communities across the country and created more than 25,000 jobs in cleanup and redevelopment.

Another critical environmental priority is the health of our Nation's forests. In recent years, millions of acres of forests, rangeland, and communities have been destroyed by wildfires. So last December, I signed the Healthy Forest Restoration Act to reduce the risk of fire, save lives and property, and improve the health of our forests. The law opens millions of acres of forest land to vital thinning projects. And by expediting the environmental review process and directing courts to consider long-term threats to forest health, the law allows us to protect more of our Nation's precious forests.

In the past three decades, America has made great strides in honoring the ideal of conservation and living by high standards of stewardship. My administration's environmental efforts uphold that legacy. In the past 4 years, America's air, land, and water have all gotten cleaner. Our new proposals build on that progress and help us advance toward our national goal of a cleaner, safer, healthier environment.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:35 p.m. on April 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of Armenian Remembrance Day, 2004

April 24, 2004

On this day, we pause in remembrance of one of the most horrible tragedies of the 20th

century, the annihilation of as many as 1.5 million Armenians through forced exile and murder at the end of the Ottoman Empire. This terrible event remains a source of pain for people in Armenia and Turkey and for all those who believe in freedom, tolerance, and the dignity of every human life. I join with my fellow Americans and the Armenian community in the United States and around the world in mourning this loss of life.

The United States is proud of the strong ties we share with Armenia. From the end of World War I and again since the reemergence of an independent Armenian state in 1991, our country has sought a partnership with Armenia that promotes democracy, security cooperation, and free markets. Today, our Nation remains committed to a peace settlement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is grateful for Armenia's continuing cooperation in the war on terror. By advancing understanding and goodwill, free nations can help build a brighter future for the world. Our country seeks to help Armenia expand its strategic relations with the United States and our European allies.

Generations of Armenian Americans have also strengthened our communities and enriched our Nation's character. By preserving their heritage, faith, and traditions, Armenian Americans enhance the diversity that makes America great.

I commend individuals in Armenia and Turkey who have worked to support peace and reconciliation, including through the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, and call on Armenia and Turkey to restore their economic, political, and cultural ties. I also send warm wishes and expressions of solidarity to the Armenian people on this solemn day of remembrance.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks to the American Association of Community Colleges Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota

April 26, 2004

Thanks for the warm welcome. Jessie, thanks for letting me come by and share some thoughts. You picked a great place to have a convention. What a great city Minneapolis is.

I—Jessie's right. I spend a lot of time at the community colleges around the country because I see the community college system in America as such a hopeful place, a place where people can gain the skills necessary to become employable, a place where people can gain the skills necessary to realize dreams. The community college system is accessible, and it's affordable, and it's flexible. It's a major asset of our country, and I want to thank those of you who are here who are leaders in the community college system around the country. I want to thank you for your dedication. I want to thank you for your spirit. I want to thank you for your vision, and I'm here to say thanks on behalf of all of America.

Not only do I want to talk about the role of community colleges in our society today, but I want to talk about the role of community colleges in the out-years as we promote a new generation of American innovation. I'm going to talk about the need for us to develop an energy policy that is based upon new technologies, new hopes, that will enable us to become less reliant upon foreign sources of energy and, at the same time, continue to improve our environment. I want to talk about the use of information technology to improve medicine and to make sure we keep the patients at the heart of the health care system. And I want to talk about affordable broadband technology so that America can stay on the leading edge of technological change.

First, Jess, thanks for leading this august group. He's *Tejano.* Nothing better to be in