

Week Ending Friday, April 28, 2000

Proclamation 7296—Bicentennial of the Library of Congress

April 21, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The Library of Congress is truly America's library. Established on April 24, 1800, as the Congress prepared to transfer the Federal Government from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., it is our country's oldest Federal cultural institution. With Thomas Jefferson's private library—acquired in 1815—as its core, the Library of Congress has reflected from its earliest days the breadth and variety of Jefferson's interests and his love of democracy, expanding the store of human knowledge, and helping ensure the free flow of ideas.

Two centuries later, the Library's collections remain diverse and expansive, containing materials on virtually every subject, in virtually every medium. The Library houses approximately 120 million items, including more than 18 million books and some of the world's largest collections of maps, manuscripts, photographs, prints, newspapers, sound recordings, motion pictures, and other research materials. The Library also offers wide-ranging services to the Government and the public, serving simultaneously as a legislative library and the major research arm of the United States Congress; the copyright agency of the United States; the world's largest law library; and a major center for preserving research materials and for digitizing documents, manuscripts, maps, motion pictures, and other specialized materials for use on the Internet.

Today, America's library is also the world's library. An international resource of unparalleled reach, the Library of Congress provides services through its 21 reading rooms in 3 buildings on Capitol Hill as well as electroni-

cally through its web site, which registers more than 4 million transactions each workday from people around the globe. With its remarkable collections and resources, the Library has truly fulfilled its stated mission to make “available and useful . . . and to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for future generations.”

Libraries have always enabled people, in the words of James Madison, to “arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” These words, inscribed at the entrance of the James Madison Memorial Building of the Library of Congress, are a tribute to the Library's past and a sustaining goal as it embarks on its third century.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 24, 2000, as a time to commemorate the Bicentennial of the Library of Congress. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that celebrate the many contributions the Library of Congress has made to strengthening our democracy and our national culture.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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The President's Radio Address*April 22, 2000*

Good morning, and happy Earth Day. I've always thought it appropriate that Earth Day falls in this season of renewal and hope, as millions of Americans celebrate Easter and Passover. As we celebrate the first Earth Day of the 21st century, I want to challenge all of us to renew our commitment to protect and preserve God's precious gift to us, our earthly home.

Last weekend in California I stood beneath a magnificent sequoia tree, more than 1,000 years old, to announce permanent protection for more than 30 giant sequoia groves. And I was grateful for every opportunity the Vice President and I have had to act as stewards of our environment over the last 7 years.

All Americans can be proud of the tremendous progress we've made since the first Earth Day 30 years ago. Our air, water, and land are cleaner, and we've protected millions of acres of America's green places. But today I want to focus on the most critical environmental challenge we face in this new century, global warming.

The 1990's were the hottest decade on record, and the first 3 months of 2000 were the hottest here in 100 years. Scientists say that the temperature rise is at least partly due to human activity, and that if left unchecked, climate change will result in more violent storms, more economic disruptions, and more permanent flooding of coastal areas.

If we value our coastlines, our farm lands, and our vital biodiversity, we must build a national consensus to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases and to help others around the world do the same. Our Government must lead by example.

Today I'm announcing two Federal initiatives that point the way to a cleaner environment and a stronger economy. First, I'm issuing an Executive order requiring that Federal agencies reduce the amount of petroleum their vehicle fleets use by 20 percent in 5 years. We can do this with technology we already have. For example, the Postal Service has purchased 500 electric trucks and may purchase more than 5,000. Here in

Washington, DC, 2,600 Federal and local government vehicles are running on clean natural gas or ethanol. Next month we'll open the first of seven gas stations offering those fuels here, and I'll order every White House vehicle that can use these fuels to make the switch. This Executive order will cut oil consumption by 45 million gallons a year, help stop global warming, and ease pressure on gas prices.

Second, I'm also announcing new incentives to cut pollution and greenhouse gases while we help Federal workers across the country reduce the growing hassle of commuting. All Federal workers now will be able to set aside up to \$65 tax-free every month to pay for public transportation. And in the Washington area, every Federal agency will actually fund some or all of its employees' public transportation costs.

It is clear citizens and businesses across America are building support for a strong response to global warming. But one voice is still missing, the United States Congress. While the science on climate change has grown stronger and the need for American leadership has grown greater, some in Congress have buried their heads even deeper in the sand. I urge them to recognize that reversing global warming will strengthen our economy while safeguarding our future.

In the next 20 years, the international energy market will reach \$5 trillion, and consumers everywhere increasingly will demand clean energy. We're the world leader in those technologies. We should be promoting them, not denying their need. Instead, for the past 7 years, Congress has blocked our initiatives to fight climate change and cut America's fuel bills.

I'm deeply disappointed the Republican budget resolution just adopted fails again to support America's environmental priorities. And again I call on Congress to reverse its opposition and work with us to pass my \$4-billion package of tax credits for energy-efficient homes, cars, and appliances, to invest in clean energy research, and to help us promote clean technology in developing countries. Congress should also end its opposition and help us improve the fuel economy of all our cars and trucks so Americans can