

Newsroom

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, Remarks at the Richard Stockton College Energy Symposium, As Prepared

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As prepared for delivery.

It is wonderful to be back in New Jersey with all of you. Thank you for inviting me to be a part of this event today and welcoming me to this very beautiful campus. I say that as someone who did some learning in the environment of this state – as a student in chemical engineering at Princeton learning about water protection and ecosystems – I know the extraordinary educational value these surroundings can have. So I thank you for showing how beautiful this state can be, for giving your students the irreplaceable opportunity to learn in and explore the 400 acres you have, and for no doubt inspiring them to see the stake they have in a healthy and protected environment and to carry that with them into their lives beyond this school.

Congratulations to President Saatkamp and the entire Stockton College community on your 40th anniversary. I hope you're enjoying celebrating everything that has happened here over the last four decades – and looking ahead to another 40 years. The EPA recently hit the same milestone – our agency was created at the end of 1970, just before Stockton was formed. We had the chance to look back over a range of accomplishments in the last 40 years: restoring thousands of waterbodies, cutting harmful air pollution by more than half, all while the US GDP grew more than 200 percent. I say that by way of pointing out that this school, in its 40 year history, has become one of the many educational institutions around the country that is advancing the science and producing the talented people that the environmental movement and the EPA have relied on for 40 years and continue to rely on today. The work you are doing is going to be even more important as we look ahead to the next 40 years. Which brings me to our discussion today.

As I was thinking about the milestones and considering our topic today, I realized that this is probably the most interesting time in the last 40 years to talk about the future of energy. There are things happening today that were science fiction when EPA and Stockton opened their doors. We have historic investment, innovation and implementation of clean energy technology throughout the public and private sectors, we are taking great strides in energy efficiency to ensure that we are getting the most out of the power we produce, and we are seeing new businesses opening their doors and hiring workers in communities across the nation.

And at a time when we are throwing open the doors of these new possibilities, we also face incredible challenges. We still have progress to make in cleaning our air – especially when it comes to the carbon pollution that is changing our climate. We also must find ways to accommodate continued growth, and build sustainable communities. Just a few years ago we reached a point at which more people on the planet are living in urban areas than in rural communities. As we look ahead to the next 40 years, the vast majority of people added to the global population will be born in cities. Not only do we have to find a way to

is creating jobs for the first time since the late 1990s, and the American auto industry is coming back – while developing fuel efficient vehicles to save drivers money and cut pollution from our skies. This is a good start, and we have to ensure we keep moving ahead. What we can't do is go back to an economy based on outsourcing, bad debt, and phony financial profits.

That's why last month President Obama provided a blueprint for creating an economy that's built to last. His blueprint was founded on four pillars: revitalized American manufacturing, more affordable education and a fair shot for American workers, a renewal of the American values that have made us both a land of opportunity and an economic superpower, and a new era of American energy innovation and production.

Obviously, the energy pillar is the most relevant today. But I believe that all of the four pillars – from manufacturing to education to renewing our values – are connected. For example, we want to make American manufacturing facilities more efficient, more sustainable and more cost-effective, giving American companies incentives to keep jobs on our shores and make their products here. The EPA has a program called E3, for "Economy, Energy, Environment" that is specifically designed to help manufacturers excel on all three of those fronts.

Another pillar is built on A Fair Shot for American Workers. We want to ensure that students and workers get the education and training they need. President Obama has outlined plans to connect our colleges to specific industries in need of new workers, and to help small businesses get up and running. He also proposed extending support for students paying down their student loans, and urged Congress to reform an immigration system that allows immigrants to come to the US and get educated – and then tells them they can't stay once they're finished. All of these things are vital to our energy future. If we are going to have an innovative energy sector, then we need to make sure we are producing the best innovators in our schools. And we need to make sure they have a chance to put their ideas to work here in the US.

Third, we have been urging a return to American Values – values of fairness for all, and responsibility from all. It is critical to our economic success that everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules. This is a place where the EPA has an important role to fill. Our mission day in and day out is to protect the health of the American people by keeping pollution out of the air we breathe, keeping toxins out of the water we drink, and keeping harmful chemicals out of the lands where we build our homes and our communities. It is consistent with American values to say that industry should not be allowed to dump untreated sewage into waters we use for the shower or to make a cup of coffee. It is consistent with those values to say that automobiles should meet standards that keep dangerous lead pollution out of our air, and that – as a rule EPA finalized last year says – power plants should have commonsense limits placed on their emissions of mercury, a neurotoxin that affects children's brain development.

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