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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON SIGNING THE PROCLAMATION
INCREASING FEES ON IMPORTED OIL

In my State of the Union Address, I set forth for the Nation energy goals to assure that our future is as secure and productive as our past.

The Proclamation I have just signed is the first step down the long and difficult road toward regaining our energy freedom. The Proclamation will gradually impose higher fees on imported oil, and this will result in substantial energy conservation by the United States.

As we begin to achieve our near-term conservation goals, the Nation will once again be going in the right direction -- which is away from energy dependence. Each day that passes without strong and tough action, which this Proclamation is, results in a further drain on our national wealth and on the jobs it creates for the American people. Each day without action means that our economy becomes more and more vulnerable to serious disruption. Each day without action increases the threat to our national security and welfare.

This Proclamation -- which is just as fair and equitable as the law permits -- must now be followed by positive Congressional action. The Nation needs a fully comprehensive and long-range energy program -- one that increases domestic energy supplies and encourages lasting conservation. To reach our national energy goals, we need the help of each American and -- especially -- their representatives in Congress.

I look forward to vigorous debate and serious Congressional hearings on the specifics of our comprehensive energy plan. The crucial point is that this Proclamation moves us in the right direction while we work to enact the energy legislation. The tactics of delay and proposals which would allow our dependency and vulnerability to increase will not be tolerated by the American people -- nor should they be.

The new energy-saving fees put us on the right path. There are problems ahead. There will be hardships. Let us get on with the job of solving this energy problem.

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