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President George Bush: (Clip from file video) Every city in America should have clean air. And with this legislation I firmly believe we will.

(Visual of countryside; smog; gasoline pumps with close-up of labels: Contains MTBE; gas station; gas pump; person replacing cap on fuel tank with close-up of gas spill on ground)

Steve Kroft, co-host:

The only trouble with that legislation is that what it required us to do to clean up our air is now polluting our water. And the culprit is something called MTBE, a chemical that the oil companies say they have no choice but to add to their gasoline. Even the government now says that we're facing a national crisis if something isn't done to stop MTBE from leaking into our drinking water.

Have there been studies done on the health effects of MTBE in the drinking water?

Bob Perciasepe (Assistant Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency): Not enough. Not enough. But...

Kroft: But any? I mean, have any been done?

Perciasepe: I'm not aware of any specific studies.

Dr. Bernard Goldstein (Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences Institute): The problem is, how do you expose one hundred million people to a chemical which you have not adequately tested for its toxicity?

Kroft: And that's what's happened?

Goldstein: That's what's happened.

Kroft: MTBE is shorthand for a chemical called methyl tertiary butyl ether. If you don't know about it yet, you will. It's a gasoline additive that is contaminating drinking water from Maine to California and has been called the biggest environmental crisis of the next decade. How did MTBE end up in gasoline? Well, ten years ago, Congress told the oil companies to put it there, either MTBE or some other oxygenate that would make gasoline burn cleaner. It was supposed to clean up the air. But now MTBE is turning up in lakes and underground aquifers, and in twenty percent of the nation's urban wells, forcing some cities to shut down local water supplies. It seems to be turning up wherever people look for it. And no one was even looking for it until it turned up in Santa Monica, California, a few years ago.

Santa Monica, California, is a beach community west of Los Angeles. Ninety thousand people live here, because they like the environment. You can stroll on the outdoor promenade. You can Rollerblade on the boardwalk. You can swim in the ocean. But you haven't been able to drink the water here for nearly four years. That's when the city discovered that seventy percent of its wells were contaminated with MTBE. Craig Perkins is director of public works for Santa Monica.

Craig Perkins (Director, Public Works, Santa Monica): The first that I heard about MTBE was early March of 1998, when my water managers came to me and said, We believe we have to start shutting down water wells because of this contaminant which we've recently discovered, MTBE.

Kroft: You ever heard of it?

Perkins: I had never heard of it.

Perkins says his staff found MTBE in the water by accident, when they sent a routine sample off to an outside lab for analysis. At first, his chemist thought it must be some sort of laboratory error. MTBE wasn't on any state or federal list of possible contaminants, and there were no requirements to test for it.

Did they know what it was? I knew-did they know where it came from?

Perkins: They had discovered what it was. And they told me that it was the chemical that makes reformulated gasoline, clean-burning gasoline, so to speak.

(Visual of gasoline pump with close-up of sticker: Contains MTBE)

Kroft: Clean-burning gasoline mandated by the Clean Air Act of 1990.

President George Bush: (Clip from file video) Every city in America should have clean air. And with this legislation, I firmly believe we will.

(Clip from video of George Bush signing bill; Visual of gasoline pump; field with sign: High Plains Ethanol Plant; ethanol distillery; corn pouring out of hopper)

Kroft: When President Bush signed it, the government basically rewrote the formula for gasoline in parts of the country where air quality was a problem. It required oil companies to make something called reformulated gasoline by adding a class of chemicals called oxygenates. There were really only two choices. Ethanol, which is distilled from corn and used to make gasohol, was a favorite of the farm lobby. But it's expensive, difficult to distribute, and not terribly practical outside the Midwest.

Most of the oil companies chose the other alternative, MTBE, a little-known chemical which was already being used in small amounts as an octane booster, and fit neatly into the existing refining and distribution system. Within a few years, MTBE was being blended into gasoline all over the country. Today, it's one of the most widely produced chemicals in the United States, four and a half billion gallons a year, roughly sixteen gallons for every man, woman and child in America.

Perkins: This is not some isolated, esoteric chemical contaminant. This is all over the United States.

This is a map showing our main well field right here...

(Visual of Perkins and Kroft looking at map; map with gas stations and well field; bottle of MTBE)

Kroft: When MTBE turned up in the water in Santa Monica, one of the first things they did was to draw a mile and a quarter radius around their main well field. They found twenty gas stations that had documented leaks from their underground storage tanks, all of them involving gasoline with MTBE. No one seemed to know how to clean it up. Perkins was also learning firsthand about some of its unique properties.

Perkins: What we found with MTBE was that it was behaving much differently than the contaminants that-that we had tracked in the past. It was moving through the-the groundwater into the wells much more quickly. On one of our wells, then it essentially doubled within a one-week period.

(Visual of Perkins and Kroft entering City of Santa Monica Water Treatment Plant; Kroft holding bottle of water, opening it and smelling it)

Kroft: With no state or federal regulations on MTBE to guide them, Santa Monica officials were on their own. But within months, their options had been reduced to one. The water the city was pumping from its wells took on a strong chemical odor and simply became undrinkable.

Smells like paint thinner.

Perkins: Yeah, turpentine, paint thinner, very--very distinct.

Kroft: Not something you want to drink.

Not only was the water undrinkable, you couldn't even cook with it.

Perkins: One of the interesting properties of MTBE is as you heat it and boil it, and even in the hot water as used in the shower, that it tends to aerate the MTBE, so the--the--the odor would become even more acute.

(Visual of pipes; Clip from aerial video of dam on Colorado River; canal)

Kroft: One by one, Perkins had to shut down seven of Santa Monica's eleven wells, forcing the city to buy water diverted from the Colorado River at a cost of three million dollars a year.

Perkins: There was really no other choice to make. How in the world are we going to let this unknown contaminant go into their drinking water, which smells like turpentine, and expect that that's OK?

(Visual of bottles of MTBE; researcher and laboratory rats; person drinking glass of water- gasoline pump with close-up of gallons pumped)

Kroft: The more Perkins found out about MTBE, the more angry he became. One study showed it caused cancer in laboratory animals when administered in high doses. No one knew anything about the human health effects of MTBE in drinking water. And he was also amazed to learn that out of every ten gallons of reformulated gasoline pumped, one gallon is pure MTBE, although it takes a lot less than a gallon to ruin a water supply.

This is one of four water reservoirs operated by the city of Santa Monica. This one is three hundred and sixty feet across, it's fifteen feet deep, and it holds five million gallons of water. Just one cupful of MTBE would make all of this water undrinkable. That's about the same amount of MTBE that can be found in one gallon of gasoline.

Perkins: I think the problem here is that--why is it out there, when we know so little about it? And that's-that's what really, really scared us.

Kroft: Nobody was required to test for it.

Perkins: That's right.

Kroft: And nobody knows how to clean it up?

Perkins: That's right.

Kroft: That's pretty incredible.

Perkins: We had a really bad year. No doubt about it.

(Clip from video of deserted gas station; sign: City of Santa Monica Water Division, Charnock Well Field MTBE Pilot Study; building with water dripping from pipe; Graphic: of map of United States with states in yellow and red; Clip from video of Atlanta; aerial video of Albuquerque; of Denver; of Dallas; of Hartford; Las Vegas)

Kroft: Since then, MTBE has caused a lot of places to have bad years. Since Santa Monica closed its wells three years ago, the state of California has identified ten thousand sites where MTBE is present in groundwater. And the problem is not confined to

California. MTBE has been detected in varying levels in groundwater in forty-nine states; twenty-one have had at least one well shut down because of it. It's been detected in groundwater in Atlanta and Albuquerque, Denver and Dallas, Hartford and Las Vegas, and lots of other places as well. Dr. Bernard Goldstein is a toxicologist and director of the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute in New Jersey. He says the problem was easily preventable, that anyone who looked at the chemical properties of MTBE would have known it was going to pollute water.

Goldstein: MTBE has got an oxygen in it, and that oxygen just makes it more soluble in water than almost anything, act-actually, else in gasoline. So you just know it's going to move more rapidly in groundwater once it gets spilled. And we know it's going to get spilled, because we know that there's leaky underground storage tanks.

Kroft: A no-brainer?

Goldstein: Yeah, I'd call it that.

(Visual of interior of building; pipes; label on bottle of MTBE; Shell gas station; Graphic: photos of abandoned gas stations in Maine; report by Dr. Peter Gaffeff and colleagues with title: MTBE as a Ground Water Contaminant, with highlights excerpted: "spreads further and faster" "stored only in double-contained facilities")

Kroft: In fact, environmental engineers, government regulators and oil industry scientists had been predicting for years that MTBE would get into groundwater. It was first detected in Rockaway, New Jersey, near a Shell station in 1980, and that's when it was being used in very small quantities. By the late 80s, MTBE had already contaminated dozens of sites in the state of Maine. Dr. Peter Garrett of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and two colleagues laid out the threat to the American Petroleum Institute and the National Well Water Association. Their report said that MTBE moved further and faster in groundwater, and was more difficult to clean up, than any other contaminant in gasoline. They recommended that it be stored with special precautions or banned outright.

It was a pretty strong paper.

Dr. Peter Garrett (Maine Department of Environmental Protection): Well, it said what needed to be said.

Kraft: If M-MTBE production and use escalated, then this was going to be a big problem.

Garrett: That's what any reader would get from the paper, yes.

(Visual of offices of American Petroleum Institute; Garrett and Kroft)

Kroft: Garrett says the American Petroleum Institute told him he was an alarmist and that his conclusions were reactionary, unwarranted and counterproductive. But Garrett made

sure the report was widely circulated among industry scientists and government regulators.

What about the EPA?

Garrett: EPA. I made-made a special point to inform them.

Kroft: At-at the time that they decided that MTBE was the solution to the air pollution problems...

Garrett: Yes.

Kroft: Did the EPA and did the oil companies know that this was likely to create a water pollution problem? Or should they have known?

Garrett: The answer is yes, it was there.

(Visual of document with close-up of United States Environmental Protection Agency logo and excerpts highlighted:

"drinking water contamination ...reported In four states" "problem could rapidly mushroom" "will increase as...MTBE in gasoline increases")

Kroft: And it was there, in black and white. In the spring of 1987, three years before the Clean Air Act was passed, this EPA memo states: Known cases of drinking water contamination have been reported in four states, affecting twenty thousand people. It's possible that this problem could rapidly mushroom due to leaking underground storage tanks. The problem of groundwater contamination will increase as the proportion of MTBE in gasoline increases.

Bob Perciasepe, an assistant administrator of the EPA, admits the agency was asleep at the switch.

Perciasepe: Those warning bells, to the extent that they were ringing--and they were ringing at some--in some parts of EPA, and they were ringing in other places-- were not ringing loudly enough, We are clearly admitting that-that they weren't ringing loudly enough, we didn't s- yell loudly enough.

Kroft: Did anybody at the EPA go to anyone in Congress and say, Hey, wait a minute, maybe we ought to take a look at this because we've got potential groundwater contamination problems? Did that happen?

Perclasepe: I can't speak for every conversation that may have occurred back in the late-80s or early-90s, but clearly, if they did bring this up in the debate on the Clean Air Act, it was drowned out by the enthusiasm for the air quality benefits that people were looking at.

(Visual of excavation of underground tank)

Kroft: Perciasepe says the EPA thought it could manage the problem. It ordered the nation's underground gasoline storage tanks to be replaced or upgraded by 1998. But more than four hundred thousand tanks weren't covered by the order, and many new tanks are already leaking.

Perciasepe: Any optimism anybody had that we could manage this potential problem has not come to fruition, and before this becomes a national crisis, before this gets worse, we need to change the way we make clean-burning gasoline.

Victor Sher (Attorney): In our view, this is a product that should never have been put into the stream of commerce.

(Visual of lake; wells; gasoline stations; label of bottle of MTBE; fuel truck; fuel storage tanks; gasoline pump with close-up of sticker: Contains MTBE)

Kroft: Victor Sher is an attorney representing the water department of South Lake Tahoe, California, where MTBE was discovered in the lake and the groundwater after the state began testing for it in 1997. Within a matter of weeks, a dozen wells, a third of the city's water production, had to be shut down. South Lake Tahoe is suing twelve local gas stations, twelve major oil companies, and several manufacturers of MTBE, arguing that those responsible for the problem should share in the enormous costs of trying to clean it up. For decades the oil industry and government regulators have known that gasoline was leaking from underground storage tanks, but until MTBE came along, most of the contaminants decomposed before they reached groundwater.

Sher: The problem is that MTBE doesn't break down, and it's going to take years and years and years and potentially enormous costs, enormous expenditures of money, to make sure that the water that is used for drinking water is clean.

(Visual of well)

Kroft: Sher says the reason South Lake Tahoe is having problems is because the wells it taps for drinking water are shallow, and that it's only a matter of time before other parts of the country with deeper wells experience the same problem.

Sher: I think what we've seen so far is just the tip of the iceberg. The bottom line is that everywhere MTBE is used, which is now in much of the country, it gets released to the environment, and it'll be a problem for groundwater.

(Visual of water tank New Jersey neighborhoods; Graphic: map of Long Island with leaks marked; Visual of signs of Texaco, ARCO, Shell, Chevron, Exxon)

Kroft: And in many places, it already is. Although it's most often found at low levels, it's

already the second most common water contaminant in the country. In New Jersey, MISE has turned up in sixty-five public drinking water supplies. In Long Island, New York, MTBE has leaked from more than four hundred gasoline storage tanks and is now being detected in small quantities in more than one hundred public water supplies. We wanted to talk to the big oil companies that manufacture, distribute and sell MTBE in gasoline, but they all turned us down, with one exception, the outgoing president and CEO of Sunoco, Bob Campbell. He told us that the deadlines for complying with the Clean Air Act were extremely tight, and the only practical way to meet them was to use MTBE.

You're a chemical engineer by training?

Bob Campbell (Outgoing President; Chief Executive Officer, Sunoco): Yes.

Kroft: We've been told by a lot of people, a lot of scientists, that all you have to do is look at the chemical properties of MTBE, and you should be able to recognize immediately that it's extremely water-soluble and that it might be a problem in contaminating drinking water.

Campbell: Right. Well, as always, hindsight is twenty/twenty.

Kroft: There was a lot of stuff out there that should have told you, or somebody in your company, that this was a potential problem with potential liability and legal problems down the road. I mean, how--how did all of this body of information get ignored?

Campbell: I don't know that it was ignored. What I'm telling you is, as a company, we did not have a body of information that I'm aware of, or that I think people in our company were aware of, which said what we're doing here is in fact creating a potential hazard. We did not have that.

Kroft: But lots of other people in the oil industry did have that information. We turned up dozens of documents showing the oil companies not only knew that MTBE was getting into groundwater, but that the problem was likely to get much worse if it was added to gasoline in greater quantities.

Campbell: What I'm saying is that if you're in the business that we're in of producing the wild potpourri of products that we produce- OK? -and questions that are raised about hydrocarbons in general, I am certain there are p-reports that were put out yesterday and last week and last month that probably question everything we do.

Kroft: If you had known then what you know now, would you have put MTBE in gasoline?

Campbell: No. No. MTBE-in all honesty, I wish I never heard of MTBE.

Kroft: And with good reason. The oil companies face huge liability issues over the use of

MTBE in gasoline. The city of Santa Monica has already won a twenty-two-million-dollar settlement from four oil companies to pay for the cost of replacing the contaminated water, and that doesn't begin to cover the costs of getting it out of the groundwater. Potential damage across the country could run into the billions. In spite of all this, the federal government still knows next to nothing about the extent of the problem or its potential health consequences. More on that when we come back.

(Commercial Break)

Kroft: Between seventy-five million and one hundred million people live in areas of the country where reformulated gasoline containing MTBE is being used. The federal government and the oil companies have known since the 1980s that it was getting into the groundwater, yet virtually nothing has been done to examine the potential health consequences or to learn the extent of the problem. Just how bad could the situation get? Take a look at Glennville, California.

(Visual of Glennville; buildings; abandoned gas station)

Kroft: Glennville, California, is a rural community of about three hundred people in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. The center of town used to be a gathering spot for ranchers and a place where tourists on their way to Death Valley could stop for gas and a bite to eat. Now it's a ghost town.

Freda Kubas (Resident): This was Grizzly's Cafe. When it was open for business, there was times that you couldn't find a table to sit at.

Kroft: Freda Kubas says it all started to change in August of 1997, when the State Water Board came in and called a town meeting.

Kubas: And that's when they told us all that we had MTBE in our water. We said, What is MTBE? And--and...

Kroft: What'd they say?

Kubas: Oh, well, they kind of shined it on and stroked it off that it was an additive put into gasoline to clean the air, and there was really nothing to be too concerned about.

Kroft: They also told them not to talk to the news media. Freda's well, she later found out, had some of the highest levels of MTBE ever recorded in drinking water.

What did they tell you to do?

Kubas: They told us to take shorter showers and cooler showers, and that would help prevent us from breathing the vapors.

Kroft: What about cooking? What about drinking?

Kubas: They told us that if we discontinued using it for that, it would leave our bodies in twelve hours.

(Visual of abandoned gas station; abandoned buildings)

Kroft: The MTBE was coming from the town's only gas station, which quickly closed down. The restaurant tried to hang on using bottled water, but with no one stopping for gas, it went under too. Everything else in Glennville just sort of faded away.

How many businesses went under here?

Kubas: I can tell you, the gas station, the mini-mart, the feed store, the antique store, a dress shop, and the cafe.

Kroft: Pretty much the whole town.

Kubas: Pretty much the whole town.

This was the livestock and the feed supply store. It saved people from making a hundred-mile trip to Bakersfield to get supplies, which really helped a lot.

(Visual of abandoned gas station; Kroft and Kubas in front of water truck; man with skin rash; Kroft and group of people)

Kroft: Even after the gas station was closed down, the number of contaminated wells has increased. The state of California has been bringing in water for fourteen families and the local saloon. People complain of intestinal problems and skin rashes, and they say the banks have stopped lending money here. People can't sell their houses.

Unidentified Man: It's kind of taken the spirit of the town away, too. So...

Kroft: All because of one leak at one gas station?

Man: Yeah. You know, in a--in a big town, you can have a leak at a station, and it's no big deal; you go to another station, or you go to another shopping center. This was the only one up here.

(Clip from aerial footage of Glennville; Visual of Environmental Protection Agency flag; person filling glass with water from faucet; person filling glass with water from pitcher; person drinking at water fountain; person cleaning; glass of water)

Kroft: How many Glennvilles or potential Glennvilles are there out there across the United States? The answer is no one really knows. Even though the Environmental Protection Agency has known since the late 1980s that MTBE was getting into drinking water, and that there were possible adverse health effects, the agency has done almost nothing. Right now the only standard for MTBE is a non-binding advisory that the agency sent out two years ago. It sets a limit of twenty to forty parts per billion in drinking water. Bob Perciasepe is assistant administrator of the EPA.

Did the EPA require local municipalities to test groundwater for the presence of MTBE?

Perciasepe: We never required them to do the testing specifically.

Kroft: There any requirements to test now?

Perciasepe: We are working on taking that advisory that we issued two years ago, and finalizing it into a standard which will require the-the--the monitoring of the drinking water.

Kroft: And--and when would that begin?

Perciasepe: We hope next year.

Kroft: You're telling me on one hand that y-that we've got to move quickly to prevent this thing from becoming a national crisis, and yet, it's still not a requirement that local governments and municipalities and water providers-they don't even have to test for MTBE. They don't even have to test for it.

Perciasepe: That is something we should've done earlier, it should've been done when the alarm bells were going off earlier.

Kroft: Ten years ago?

Sher: We really haven't looked for MTBE yet. It's been sort of a "don't ask, don't tell" examination.

Kroft: Victor Sher, the attorney suing the oil companies on behalf of South Lake Tahoe, says there are only a few states that require testing for MTBE in drinking water. And forty-two million Americans get their drinking water from private wells which usually aren't monitored at all, or if they are, may not be tested for MTBE.

Sher: The only entities that are really in a position to understand the extent of the problem, and to know how many gas stations leak and to what extent, and to what extent MTBE is galling into the environment, are the oil companies, and they haven't done adequate testing.

(Visual or people testing water; Chevron station)

Kroft: And the testing we know about that has been done by the oil companies is not very encouraging. One internal study conducted by Chevron found that MTBE has contaminated the groundwater at eighty percent of the four hundred sites the company tested.

Sher: What we do know is that every time somebody tries to examine either the frequency

of releases from gasoline stations or the occurrence of MTBE in groundwater, the statistics have to be revised upward. That is, the more we look, the more we find it.

(Visual of water coming from hose; document with close-up of text: Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances with excerpt highlighted: "Conduct studies by ingestion.")

Kroft: If little is known about the extent of MTBE pollution in water supplies, even less is known about the human health effects of drinking the contaminated water. Way back in 1987, this memo from the Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances recommends that the EPA conduct six kinds of ingestion studies, as well as inhalation studies.

Were those studies done?

Perciasepe: Most of the studies that were done in the late '80s and into the early '90s were done on inhalation, and in-and that was a mistake.

Kroft: Have there been studies done on the health effects of MTBE In the drinking water?

Perclasepe: Not enough. Not enough. But...

Kroft: But any? I mean, have any been done?

Perciasepe: I'm not aware of any specific studies that have been done on that.

Kroft: What are you doing about the problem? Right now. I mean, what has been done since this first memo in 1987? What's been done?

Perciasepe: Not enough.

(Visual or researchers with laboratory rats)

Kroft: In fact, the only study that has ever been conducted on ingesting MTBE was done on laboratory animals in Italy more than five years ago. It showed that in high doses, it caused leukemia, lymphoma and testicular cancer. But those results have been questioned by some scientists. The EPA's position is that MTBE is a possible human carcinogen.

Goldstein: How do you expose one hundred million people to a chemical which you have not adequately tested for its toxicity?

Kroft: And that's what's happened?

Goldstein: That's what's happened.

Kroft: Dr. Bernard Goldstein, the toxicologist, says the studies should have been done before the government allowed huge quantities of MTBE to be put in gasoline. He calls it a classic case of how not to protect the public.

Goldstein: This is a chemical that's in gasoline. If I wanted to be sure that I poisoned as

many Americans as possible, I'd put something in gasoline. I mean, that's what we're all exposed to, with the exception of, I guess, a few hermits in the Mojave Desert, which means that you want to study this even more carefully than you'd study any other chemical.

Kroft: Absent scientific data on the human health effects of MTBE in drinking water, and confronted with growing reports of groundwater contamination, the EPA's position now is that action must be taken. Last summer, a blue-ribbon panel of environmentalists, scientists, government regulators and industry representatives recommended that Congress do away with the oxygenate requirement in the Clean Air Act, so that industry can begin phasing out the use of MTBE. Sunoco's chief executive officer, Bob Campbell, was one of the members.

Campbell: We as an industry and a company are there to be responsive to people. And we're not about to continue to put something in gasoline that causes it—that causes drinking water to smell funny and taste funny.

Kroft: And the presumption is that if it's a gasoline additive and it smells funny and tastes funny, it's probably not good for you.

Campbell: It's probably not good for you. I think that's the presumption that—that most people would have, certainly, that if it smells funny and tastes funny. I'm not going to worry about all your health effects study or all these expert testimony; I just don't want it there.

Kroft: Why are you still putting it in your gasoline?

Campbell: I'd love not to be, you know, putting it in our gasoline today. But I don't have any choice. As it stands right now, there's a law out there that requires that reformulated gasoline contains two percent by weight of oxygen. And the only practical alternative that I have, in order to comply with that law, is that we use MTBE, and we are using it today, as we sit here.

Perciasepe: We—we don't need to do more studies to determine whether or not we should remove this additive from gasoline. We—we know enough now. We don't need more studies; we should do it now.

Kroft: You can talk about eliminating MTBE for gasoline, but what about the MTBE in the water? I mean, it's still there in Santa Monica. It w—it's still there in Lake Tahoe. It's still present in some levels in twenty percent of the urban wells in the United States. Shouldn't we find out whether it's dangerous to humans, whether it causes cancer?

Perciasepe: Our first defense is to get it out, to keep this problem from getting worse. We will have to continue that effort. I don't think it will be acceptable to leave this in the water. We will have to work to get it out of the water.

Kroft: None of this is any consolation to the people of Glennville, California, where one well there tested at twenty thousand parts per billion of MTBE, one thousand times greater than the level the EPA is now recommending.

There's no indication yet that MTBE has human health consequences, you know that?

Kubas: That's what they say. But if they would really like to know the human health consequences of MTBE, they have an awful lot of guinea pigs right here in Glennville.

Kroft: There are several studies now under way looking at possible health effects of MTBE in drinking water, and technology is being developed to remove the contaminant from groundwater. What's lacking is an engineering solution to make the process practical and cost-effective. There hasn't been much progress in removing MTBE from gasoline, either. Six months have passed since the government's blue-ribbon panel issued its recommendations, yet Congress has done nothing about lifting the oxygenate requirement of the Clean Air Act, which would allow the oil companies to begin removing MTBE from gasoline.

Perciasepe: Early part of the decade.

(Visual of Goldstein; gas station; sticker on gas pump: Contains MTBE)

End