

PRESERVING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

M E S S A G E

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

PROGRAMS FOR CONTROLLING POLLUTION AND PRESERVING
OUR NATURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE

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To the Congress of the United States:

Albert Schweitzer said: "Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth."

The most affluent nation on earth may feel that it is immune from this indictment. A nation that offered its people—a century ago—uncharted forests, broad sparkling rivers, and prairies ripe for planting, may have expected that bounty to endure forever.

But we do not live alone with wishful expectations.

We live with history. It tells us of a hundred proud civilizations that have decayed through careless neglect of the nature that fed them.

We live with the certain future of multiplying populations, whose demands on the resources of nature will equal their numbers.

We are not immune. We are not endowed—any more than were those perished nations of the past—with a limitless natural bounty.

Yet we are endowed with their experience. We are able to see the magnitude of the choice before us, and its consequences for every child born on our continent from this day forward.

Economists estimate that this generation has already suffered losses from pollution that run into billions of dollars each year. But the ultimate cost of pollution is incalculable.

We see that we can corrupt and destroy our lands, our rivers, our forests, and the atmosphere itself—all in the name of progress and

necessity. Such a course leads to a barren America, bereft of its beauty, and shorn of its sustenance.

We see that there is another course—more expensive today, more demanding. Down this course lies a natural America restored to her people. The promise is clear rivers, tall forests, and clean air—a sane environment for man.

I shall propose in this message one means to achieve that promise. It requires, first, an understanding of what has already happened to our waters.

THE POLLUTION OF OUR WATERS

“Pollution touches us all. We are at the same time polluters and sufferers from pollution. Today, we are certain that pollution adversely affects the quality of our lives. In the future, it may affect their duration.”

These are the words of the Environmental Pollution Panel of the President's Science Advisory Committee. They were written in November 1965.

At that time, every river system in America suffered some degree of pollution.

At that time, discharges into our rivers and streams—both treated and untreated—equaled the raw sewage from almost 50 million people. Animal wastes and waste from our cities and towns were making water unfit for any use.

At that time, rivers, lakes, and estuaries were receiving great quantities of industrial chemicals—acids from mine runoff, detergents and minerals that would not “break down” in the ordinary life of the water. These pollutants were reentering domestic and industrial water supplies. They were killing fish. They posed hazards to both human and animal life.

By that time, on Lake Erie 6 of 32 public recreation and swimming areas had been closed down because the water was unsafe for human beings. The blue pike catch in the lake had fallen from 20 million pounds in 1937 to 7,000 pounds in 1960. The oxygen that fish need for life was being rapidly devoured by blooms of algae fed by pollutants.

At that time, in the lower Arkansas Red River Basin, oilfield development and irrigation were dumping salt into rivers. The result was an additional annual expense of \$13 million to bring in fresh water.

I have placed these comments in the past tense not because they are no longer true. *They are more tragically true today than they were 4 months ago.*

I seek instead to make them a benchmark in restoring America's precious heritage to her people.

I seek to make them that point in time when Americans determined to resist the flow of poison in their rivers and streams.

I seek to make them ancient history for the next generation.

And I believe the conditions they describe can become just that—if we begin now, together, to cleanse our rivers of the blight that burdens them.

A START HAS BEEN MADE

The 1st session of the 89th Congress launched a major effort to save America's water resources.

It authorized quality standards for all interstate waters.

It provided—in the Water Pollution Control Act of 1965—new resources for treating the wastes from our cities.

It created the Water Resources Council to coordinate all aspects of river basin planning. This unified effort promises to make the work of pollution control more effective.

We must make full use of these new instruments. They will require increased expenditures, in a year of few increases for urgent domestic programs. We shall make them.

Yet at this point the development of new knowledge, and new organizations to carry on this work, is as crucial as our dollars.

We must combine all the means at our disposal—Federal, State, local, and private—progressively to reduce the pollution of our rivers.

A CLEAN RIVERS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

I propose that we begin now to clean and preserve entire river basins from their sources to their mouths.

I propose a new kind of partnership—built upon our creative federal system—that will unite all the pollution control activities in a single river basin. Its task is to achieve high standards of water quality throughout the basin.

The clean rivers demonstration program I recommend has four requirements:

1. Appropriate water quality standards—authorized by the Water Quality Act of 1965—must be adopted for every part of the basin.

2. The States and local communities must develop long-range plans to achieve those standards and to preserve them. The plans must be comprehensive, and they must be practical.

3. Where it does not already exist, a permanent river basin organization must be created to carry out the plan. It must represent the communities and the States. It must work closely with the Federal Government. The organization must be prepared to revise the plan as conditions require, so that new threats to the quality of the river may be turned back.

4. Communities must be willing and able to contribute funds necessary for constructing facilities. They must be prepared to levy charges for their use—charges adequate to maintain, extend, and replace them when needed.

THE FEDERAL ROLE

Federal financial assistance will be necessary if the clean rivers demonstration program is to succeed.

In most watersheds there are communities wholly without treatment facilities. There are some with only the most basic means for removing solid wastes.

Substantial funds will be necessary to construct the initial facilities. I therefore propose to—

Eliminate the dollar-ceiling limitation on grants for sewage treatment facilities in these clean river demonstrations—but only in the demonstrations.

Provide special funds to finance both planning and project costs in clean river demonstrations.

In the first year, I am asking \$50 million to begin this program.

To administer the program most effectively, we must reorganize the Federal effort. In the past, the Federal antipollution effort has been organizationally separate from water conservation and use programs.

One agency should assume leadership in our clean water effort. That agency should be the Department of the Interior.

Today the Department's water management programs range from saline water research to irrigation. It is responsible for wildlife preservation, and for administering the national park system. Its Secretary serves as Chairman of the Water Resources Council. Thus its present task, and the logic of good government, require that it be entrusted with an important new effort to clean and preserve entire river systems.

I shall shortly submit to the Congress a reorganization plan to transfer to the Department of the Interior the Water Pollution Control Administration now housed in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

The program has one ultimate goal: to clean all of America's rivers. This year we shall start with those few basins whose States and communities are prepared to begin. As additional organizations are formed and their plans drafted, more basins will qualify.

The projects will be self-sustaining. Federal assistance is planned for the initial construction of local treatment works. Thereafter, local communities will collect revenues from users sufficient for the operation, expansion, and replacement of the facilities. Continuing responsibility will reside where the benefits accrue—with local authorities.

The projects will allow experiment with new forms of organization. State and local participation may be based on an interstate compact, a river basin commission, or even a conservancy district. The central requirement is for sufficient jurisdiction and authority to develop and carry out the long-range plan.

These projects will enable us to curtail and control pollution in entire river basins. Broad-scale planning of water standards in broad stretches of a river can achieve substantial economies. More efficient plants can be built to treat the wastes of several communities and nearby industries. Integrating the control of streamflow and treatment-plant operation can reduce costs—for example, by fitting the type and amount of day-to-day treatment to varying stream conditions.

OUR ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS

The clean rivers program now holds great promise for restoring and preserving water quality. But in the beginning it can affect only a few areas.

Our existing programs must continue. They must be improved—not only to help rescue other rivers from pollution, but because they provide the foundation for the river basin demonstration projects.

Federal grants for waste treatment plants now total more than \$725 million. More than 6,000 projects are under construction or already completed. For fiscal 1967 I have requested the Congress to appro-

priate \$150 million, the full authorized amount, to continue this vital effort.

Under last year's act, the initiative for water quality standards rests, until July 1967, with the States. State governments now have an obligation to demonstrate their willingness and ability to control pollution. Some have already done so. The Federal Government must extend all possible help to enable the States to meet this responsibility.

I am therefore recommending that support for State water pollution control agencies be doubled. The added amount should be used at the Secretary's discretion to assist States in devising effective water quality standards. It should be used to prepare plans for abating pollution.

ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY

Standards, however, mean little without the power to enforce them. Existing Federal authority to abate water pollution is unnecessarily time consuming, complex in procedure, and limited in jurisdiction. Steps must be taken to simplify and strengthen these procedures.

I recommend that—

1. The Water Pollution Control Act be amended to eliminate the two mandatory 6-month delays that unnecessarily burden its procedures;

2. The Federal Government have authority immediately to bring suit to stop pollution, when that pollution constitutes an imminent danger to public health or welfare;

3. More weight to be given by the courts to the evidence produced in administrative enforcement hearings;

4. The Federal Government have the right to subpoena witnesses to appear at administrative hearings;

5. The Secretary be given the right to initiate enforcement proceedings when pollution occurs in navigable waters, intrastate or interstate;

6. Registration be required of all existing or potential sources of major pollution, and U.S. officials be given the right to inspect such sources; and

7. Private citizens be allowed to bring suit in Federal court to seek relief from pollution.

These are strong measures but the menace of pollution requires them. It poses a major threat to the quality of life in our country.

RESEARCH FOR COMPREHENSIVE POLLUTION CONTROL

The river basin proposals I am submitting take advantage of the best techniques available today. They apply new concepts of efficient organization. But if pollution control is to cope with increasing volumes of waste from our growing industry and population, new knowledge and technology are required. It is a challenge to research organizations, both private and public, to develop these technologies.

1. *There must be new integrated systems of disposal.*—Many liquid wastes can be transformed to solids or gases—or vice versa. Research can show which form is least harmful and least costly. Research can reduce costs through combined solid-liquid disposal systems.

2. *The technology of water treatment must be improved.*—We must find ways to allow more "reuse" of waste water at reasonable costs. We

must remove or control nutrients that cause excessive growth of plant life in streams, lakes, and estuaries. We must take steps to control the damage caused by waters that "heat up" after cooling generators and industrial engines.

3. *More must be learned about the effects of pollutants and the present level of pollution.*—Better equipment must be developed to measure pollution load and movement. We must assess the results of particular pollutants on plant, animal, and human populations. We should continually monitor the quality of our environment, to provide a yardstick against which our progress in pollution abatement can be measured. We must apply the most modern techniques of systems analysis.

Such research will lead to pollution standards suited for each location and type of pollutant. It will permit us to direct our control efforts more efficiently. I am proposing that we spend over \$20 million next year on this research.

CONTROL OF AIR POLLUTION

The Clean Air Act of 1963 and its 1965 amendments have given us new tools to help attack the pollution that fouls the air we breathe.

We have begun to counter air pollution by increasing the tempo of effort at all levels of government.

In less than 2 years Federal financial assistance has stimulated a 50-percent increase in the air pollution budgets of States and local governments. Federal standards for the control of automobile exhausts will apply to the 1968 models. The Federal interstate abatement program will significantly supplement State and local efforts to deal with air pollution.

I am heartened by the progress we are making. But I am mindful that we have only begun our work. *I am forwarding to the Congress proposals to improve and increase Federal research, financing, and technical assistance to help States and local governments take the measures needed to control air pollution.*

POLLUTION FROM FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

The Federal Government is rightly expected to provide an example to the Nation in pollution control. We cannot make new demands on State and local governments or on private industry without putting the Federal house in order. We will take the necessary steps this year to insure that Federal activities do not contribute to the deterioration of our water and air.

Last November I signed an Executive order requiring that all new Federal installations include adequate water pollution control systems. Agencies are required to submit long-range plans to bring existing installations up to the high level of pollution control required of new facilities. These plans are to be submitted by July 1 of this year. We are providing the funds necessary to implement them.

I also intend to issue an Executive order dealing with air pollution from Federal activities. The potential dangers of air pollution have only recently been realized. The technical and economic difficulties in conserving the purity of our air are, if anything, greater than in protecting our water resources. Nevertheless, I intend to see that

the necessary steps are taken to curtail emissions from Federal installations.

HUMAN RESOURCES FOR POLLUTION CONTROL

New projects and new technology are of little value without skilled people dedicated to putting them to effective use.

I propose to enlist the services of those in industry and the universities.

I propose to attract skilled administrators and scientists to the challenges of full-time occupations in pollution control.

Critical skills are in short supply in all public pollution control operations. We need to train scientists and social scientists in these activities, and to demonstrate the advantages of Government service as a lifetime occupation. I propose to establish traineeships, fellowships, and an internship program in Federal pollution control activities. The participants will be in residence in Federal pollution control programs throughout the country.

IMPACT ON OUR CITIES

The pollution control programs I have recommended will benefit all Americans.

But nowhere will the impact be greater than on our cities.

These steps can clean the air that is today blighted by smoke and chemicals.

These steps can bring to growing urban centers abundant supplies of pure water to sustain today's prosperity and to satisfy tomorrow's needs.

These steps can enrich the daily life of the city dweller and his children by restoring surrounding waterways to their unspoiled natural beauty. For we know that ugliness is degrading and costly, but that beauty can revive the human spirit and enlarge the imagination.

NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION

In no area of resource management are the problems more complex—or more important—than those involving our Nation's water supplies. The water shortage in the Northeastern United States is a dramatic reminder that we must take every possible step to improve the management of our precious water resources.

I propose the establishment of a National Water Commission to review and advise on the entire range of water resource problems—from methods to conserve and augment existing water supplies to the application of modern technology, such as desalting, to provide more usable water for our cities, our industries, and our farms.

This Commission will be composed of the very best minds in the country. It will judge the quality of our present efforts. It will recommend long-range plans for the future. It will point the way to increased and more effective water resource measures by the Federal Government, working in close cooperation with States, local communities, and private industry.

SAVING OUR FORESTS

Since the century's beginning the National Government has labored to preserve the sublime legacy that is the American forest.

Time after time public intervention has prevented the destruction of irreplaceable forest lands.

Our national park and forest systems are America's principal trustee in the vital task of conservation. That task cannot be accomplished in a single stroke. It requires patient determination and careful planning to secure for our people the beauty that is justly theirs. It merits careful planning.

I propose that we plan now to complete our national park system by 1972—the 100th anniversary of Yellowstone, the world's first national park.

Substantial progress has been made during the last 4 years. Yet many scenic masterpieces remain unprotected and deserve early inclusion in the national park system.

A REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

I propose the creation of a Redwood National Park in northern California.

It is possible to reclaim a river like the Potomac from the carelessness of man. But we cannot restore—once it is lost—the majesty of a forest whose trees soared upward 2,000 years ago. The Secretary of the Interior—after exhaustive consultations with preservationists, officials of the State of California, lumbermen, and others—has completed a study of the desirability of establishing a park of international significance.

I have reviewed his recommendations, and am submitting to the Congress legislation to establish such a park. This will be costly. But it is my recommendation that we move swiftly to save an area of immense significance before it is too late.

OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION PROPOSALS

Other major outdoor recreation proposals which should be approved in 1966 are:

1. Cape Lookout National Seashore, N.C.
2. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Mich.
3. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Ind.
4. Oregon Dunes National Seashore, Oreg.
5. Great Basin National Park, Nev.
6. Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Tex.
7. Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Mont. and Wyo.
8. Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, Utah and Wyo.

For a region which now has no national park, I recommend the study of a Connecticut River National Recreation Area along New England's largest river, in the States of New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

I propose the early completion of studies and planning for two new parks—the Apostle Isles Seashore along Lake Superior and North Cascades in Washington State.

NATIONWIDE TRAIL SYSTEM

In my budget, I recommended legislation to extend Federal support to the Appalachian Trail, and to encourage the development of hiking trails accessible to the people throughout the country.

I am submitting legislation to foster the development by Federal, State, and local agencies of a nationwide system of trails and give special emphasis to the location of trails near metropolitan areas.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC SITES

Historic preservation is the goal of citizen groups in every part of the country. To help preserve buildings and sites of historic significance, I will recommend a program of matching grants to States and to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

WILD RIVER SYSTEM

I am encouraged by the response to my proposal for a national wild rivers system, and I urge the Congress to complete this pioneering conservation legislation this year.

COSTS OF LAND ACQUISITION

The spiraling cost of land acquisitions by the Federal Government, particularly for water resource and recreational purposes, is a matter of increasing concern.

Landowners whose property is acquired by the Federal Government are, of course, entitled to just compensation as provided by the Constitution. At the same time, land for the use of the general public should not be burdened with the increased price resulting from speculative activities.

I have requested the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, together with the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Interior, and the heads of the other agencies principally concerned, to investigate procedures for protecting the Government against such artificial price spirals.

A CREED TO PRESERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

To sustain an environment suitable for man, we must fight on a thousand battlegrounds. Despite all of our wealth and knowledge, we cannot create a redwood forest, a wild river, or a gleaming seashore.

But we can keep those we have.

The science that has increased our abundance can find ways to restore and renew an environment equal to our needs.

The time is ripe to set forth a creed to preserve our natural heritage—principles which men and women of good will, will support in order to assure the beauty and bounty of their land. Conservation is ethically sound. It is rooted in our love of the land, our respect for the rights of others, our devotion to the rule of law.

Let us proclaim a creed to preserve our natural heritage with rights and the duties to respect those rights:

The right to clean water—and the duty not to pollute it.

The right to clean air—and the duty not to befoul it.

The right to surroundings reasonably free from manmade ugliness—and the duty not to blight.

The right of easy access to places of beauty and tranquillity where every family can find recreation and refreshment—and the duty to preserve such places clean and unspoiled.

The right to enjoy plants and animals in their natural habitats—and the duty not to eliminate them from the face of this earth.

These rights assert that no person, or company or government has a right in this day and age to pollute, to abuse resources, or to waste our common heritage.

The work to achieve these rights will not be easy. It cannot be completed in a year or 5 years. But there will never be a better time to begin.

Let us from this moment begin our work in earnest—so that future generations of Americans will look back and say: “1966 was the year of the new conservation, when farsighted men took farsighted steps to preserve the beauty that is the heritage of our Republic.”

I urge the Congress to give favorable consideration to the proposals I have recommended in this message.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 23, 1966.*

