

The adverse effects of air pollution are already very serious. Air pollution threatens the American people in many diverse ways. Its impact is felt directly or indirectly in virtually every part of the United States, in both large cities and small towns and in agricultural and recreational as well as industrial areas.

There are many important reasons why better control of air pollution is urgently needed now. Air pollution, by interfering with visibility, sometimes imperils air and highway transportation. Polluted air soils, corrodes, and otherwise damages property and goods, including buildings and monuments as well as clothing and home furnishings. In our large cities, buildings must be scrubbed to prevent them from deteriorating; the bill for cleaning a 50-story building can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Some of the damage caused by air pollution cannot be repaired at any price. In many cities abroad, historic buildings and sculpture that withstood the ravages of time and weather for hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years are now crumbling under the onslaught of pollution. The magnificent Parthenon in Athens is just one of many irreplaceable structures that are under attack from corrosive air pollutants. No amount of money spent to clean up the filth left behind by air pollution will keep this sort of thing from happening. Only an adequate investment in control action can accomplish this.

The damage done by air pollution is not limited to urban places, Mr. Chairman. Air pollution affects forests and farmlands and farmers as well. It causes hundreds of millions of dollars of damage to crops each year. It contributes to urban decay and deterioration of property values. In total, the economic losses resulting from uncontrolled air pollution are estimated to be 11 billion dollars annually. And this figure, Mr. Chairman, represents only the price of living with polluted air and, to some extent, cleaning up the dirt it leaves everywhere. Currently, then, the costs of inadequately controlled air pollution are measured in the billions of dollars annually, while the costs of control action are in the millions. Clearly, the cost to society as a whole for cleaner air would be considerably less than what we are now paying. We need to keep this fact in mind when we try to assess the true cost of controlling air pollution.

Even if the problem of air pollution threatened only our pocketbooks, we would have ample reason to increase and accelerate our efforts to deal with it. But the fact is that we have an even more compelling reason, for air pollution poses a very serious threat to the public health—to your health and mine.

There is no doubt that air pollution contributes to the occurrence and worsening of such chronic respiratory diseases as lung cancer, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthma. There is even some evidence that certain types of air pollution may contribute to the occurrence of those upper respiratory diseases known generally as the common cold. We know from tragic experience that ordinary air pollutants in higher than ordinary concentrations have caused mass illness and death, both in European cities, notably London, where thousands of people died in a 1952 air pollution disaster, and to a lesser extent, in the United States, in such a relatively small community as Donora, Pennsylvania, as well as in such large cities as New York, where at least two episodes are known to have occurred. The harmful effects of air pollution at the levels that are commonplace in many American cities and towns are less obvious, but the accumulated evidence from epidemiological and statistical studies as well as laboratory and clinical investigations leaves no room for doubt as to the connection between long-term exposure to polluted air and the occurrence of illness and death from chronic respiratory disease. The threat to health is, in my view, the primary reason why, in the past decade, the American people and their representatives in the Congress have called increasingly for decisive action at all levels of Government to put an end to contamination of the air we breathe.

Mr. Chairman, we have brought together a great deal of the existing scientific information on this problem in order to make available documentation of the health hazards of air pollution. I am submitting this report for the record. It is entitled "The Health Hazards of Community Air Pollution."

All of the major trends that contribute to air pollution are rising. Our production and consumption of goods and services are increasing. The number of motor vehicles on our streets and highways is increasing. Our demands for heat and electric power produced by the burning of fossil fuels are mounting. In addition, the onward rush of technology is continuing and is constantly adding new and more complex dimensions to the air pollution problem.

The impact of all these trends is magnified and reinforced by the continuing trend toward greater concentration of people and sources of air pollution in our