

not be adequate to keep this problem from worsening in the face of projected future increases in our use of motor vehicles. More than 85 million motor vehicles are now in use in the U.S. and this number increases every year. It is estimated there will be 120 million vehicles in use by 1980.

For the future, then, the development of alternate power sources with less inherent potential for polluting the air is essential. The necessary research cannot be started too soon. To insure that such systems will be available in time to keep the motor vehicle problem from reaching critical proportions, prototype models must be available for testing by 1985. This major challenge will obviously require the combined research efforts of Government and industry. Our pending budget request, Mr. Chairman, includes funds with which we can begin planning our own efforts in this area and encouraging industry as well as private research institutions to undertake similar work.

The disposal of solid waste materials is a major factor in many of our most serious environmental contamination problems. The burning and incineration of refuse contributes to air pollution in all parts of the country. The growing piles of waste materials lying in and around countless American communities contribute to water and soil pollution. And heedless disposal of refuse is, of course, an important cause of the ugliness that blights many of our fairest cities and towns and is increasingly spreading into the countryside.

In years to come, this problem can only worsen unless we make a conscious effort to bring it under control. As the economy moves upward, we not only produce and use more goods, we also discard more. As technical advances are translated into new products and materials, the character of what we throw away becomes more varied and more complex. Moreover, since control of air and water pollution often yields solid waste material, our progress in these areas may also add to the growing waste disposal burden.

To dispose of the mounting volume of solid waste without polluting air, water, and soil, and thus threatening public health, is an incredibly complex challenge. As yet, we are not now equipped as a Nation to meet it. But now, for the first time, there is hope that we are on the road to finding the necessary capability. Under the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is mounting a national program to deal with the waste disposal problem. The program includes research, technical assistance, and training activities, as well as projects to demonstrate new and promising ways of managing solid waste problems and grants to States to assist them in surveys of refuse problems and planning of needed programs. I am pleased to note, Mr. Chairman, that this program is getting underway very rapidly. Mr. Gilbertson will report on this in greater detail.

I just want to point out that here, too, that Secretary Gardner and I are committed not to any single approach, but to full exploration of *all* promising ways of dealing with the problem. Among the most important needs in this field are a better understanding of the extent and control of such problems as the breeding of disease-causing organisms and contamination of ground waters by landfill operations and substantial technical improvements in both the operation of landfills and the design and operation of incinerators. The possibilities of recapturing and using heat from incinerators and of converting refuse to soil conditioners are also deserving of close attention.

In the long run, Mr. Chairman, it will not be sufficient merely to find better ways of disposing of refuse, though this is surely an important objective. Wherever possible, we must also seek and apply ways of reducing the volume of materials discarded from homes, offices, and factories, as well as ways of recovering materials which may be re-usable. The end result, if we are successful, will be a very important step toward a more beautiful and more healthful environment for all Americans.

Mr. Chairman, I have tried this morning to throw some light on the many complex ramifications of environmental contamination and to suggest the broad approach which we in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare feel is the most promising way of bringing these problems under effective control. In the course of these hearings, you will undoubtedly hear testimony from many persons whose views differ from ours with respect to the seriousness of many environmental contamination problems and the relative merits of various ways of dealing with them. Such differences of opinion are to be expected when the subject is as complex as this one. I think it is important, however, that we assess these varying points of view in the full light of some basic facts about environmental contamination and our present understanding of its impact on society.