

REPORT ON POLLUTION
TO
THE RESEARCH MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY PANEL
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND ASTRONAUTICS
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GENERAL SUMMARY

A review of the present status of water, air, and land pollution and proposals for abatement thereof makes reasonably clear that corrective legislation has quite well outrun both factual bases for action and smooth machinery for development and regulation. One need not belabor the interesting question as to how these "crisis" laws appeared so prolifically, except to note that they were presumably sparked by sudden awakenings of social consciousness.

As time passes, the health implications of many of the underlying justifications for speedy action will become clearer. It is evident, however, that some exaggerations in this area will be dampened. That society wishes cleaner water, air, and soil is abundantly clear. Whether it is willing and able to pay for them remains to be demonstrated.

Throughout the inquiry, it is manifest that the objectives need to be defined, if only in general terms, in legislative directives and in administrative rule. The wide spectrum of ultimate purposes now prevailing provides little guidance and much confusion.

A more specific and less propagandistic factual basis should be developed for abatement guidance. The blanket tabulations now in print are designed for gross alarm rather than for detailed isolation of problem. We are badly in need of information on the present condition of water, air, and land—as base lines for intelligent action in the future.

In the field of economics, information on local capacity to pay is singularly deficient. It may be universally true that, as one observer puts it: "the problems are in the municipalities and the money is in Washington." The documentation on this presumed axiom is missing.

With the growth of Federal grants-in-aid, in this field alone, over 30 were operative in 1965. A search for alternatives to these prolifera-