

STATEMENT SUBMITTED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, RESEARCH,
AND DEVELOPMENT BY CONGRESSMAN DON EDWARDS, OF CALIFORNIA,
SEPTEMBER 6, 1966

Mr. Chairman, as a Representative from a State which has its own serious and well-known problems of pollution of our environment, I am very pleased to be able to present this statement to your committee as you inquire into the adequacy of our technology for controlling pollution.

The deleterious effects of pollution for plant and animal life, for human health and comfort, for our economy and our recreational life, are reaching a critical stage. An unfortunate byproduct of the growth and development of America as an urban, industrial nation has been the pouring into our waters, air, and land, the waste of our produce. As we have taken out and used the resources of the earth, we have paid little if any attention to the quality of what we put back. We have reached a point where if we do not take forceful comprehensive steps to clean up our own filth and to place effective controls on the source of pollutants, we shall indeed stifle life on earth.

We are essentially a user society, as opposed to a consumer society. While the streamflow and the amount of air remain constant, the degree of pollution is ever greater with the increased production and consumption of goods, the increased number of cars, the increased demands for heat and electric power and the urbanization and concentration of people.

The Federal Government has an undeniable and essential role in reversing this deadly trend. I strongly support the legislation now before the Congress to amend and expand last winter's Water Quality Act and Clean Air Act and I will support strengthening of these bills. We must recognize that this problem is not limited by State lines. Air currents know no State boundaries. Nor do streamflows. The Federal Government, with its vaster resources, can financially assist local governments in construction and operation of treatment plants and other facilities. And it can offer incentives to municipalities and industries to take requisite action. Nationally coordinated research can avoid duplication and wasted money. Finally, I recommend strengthening the enforcement powers of the Government of the United States. I'm in total agreement with the President's recommendations in this regard, as he outlined them in his message to the Congress in February of this year.

It is imperative that the National Government take the lead in this field both because of its financial resources and its interstate character. But there is the additional and more crucial reason that without this potential force, we will not even be able to come close to cleaning up our environment. Without the clearly defined national goals, forcefully implemented, of unspoiled rivers and pure air, industries and municipalities and individuals will continue to dump their refuse and soot into surroundings belonging to all Americans.