

Mr. COHEN. First, Mr. Chairman, let me say that we welcome your hearings on this subject, because we know the important interest that you have in keeping governmental functions adjusted to changing conditions. Regardless of our particular views on this bill, Secretary Gardner and I feel that the subcommittee performs a vital function of the interior would have a central allocation of responsibilities on the American public in recognizing the need for conservation of our natural resources and perhaps, even, it would be a better name to call it the Department of Conservation of Natural Resources. In view of the tremendous problem we are going to have in the future with the growing population, we must give very careful consideration to the conservation of our natural resources.

HEALTH ORIENTATION OF AIR POLLUTION AND SOLID WASTE PROGRAMS

In my statement I presented the reasons why we believe the air pollution activities and the solid waste programs that are now in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare should continue to remain in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

There are two basis points that should be made.

First, this is a matter of great importance to the public health of the Nation.

It will become increasingly more important as time goes on. We believe this is a health function and should remain in a health-oriented agency.

Secondly, at the State level, air pollution activities are largely concentrated in State health departments and there is a normal Federal- with the utilization of natural resources, there is a tendency toward, at least a tension if not a conflict, between the producers of coal and oil and other natural resources on the one hand, and, of course, the health function on the other. And I think it would not be, in the long run, of public interest to have these two functions administered in the same department when there is that difference in objectives.

As a matter of fact, I would maintain, Senator Ribicoff, that even if the function were transferred from the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the preservation of the public health would