

EXHIBIT 15

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE,
October 17, 1967.

HON. ABRAHAM RIBICOFF,

Chairman, Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization, Committee on Government Operations, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter is in response to your request of March 6, 1967, for a report on S. 886, a bill, "To redesignate the Department of the Interior as the Department of Natural Resources and to transfer certain agencies to and from such Department."

This bill would have a substantial impact on this Department since it provides for the transfer of—

1. The functions of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under

In addition to these changes, the bill calls for the transfer of several other agencies and functions from other departments and agencies to the proposed Department of Natural Resources.

Air pollution control and solid waste disposal functions

The main purpose of the bill is to locate within the proposed Department of Natural Resources those functions administered by the Federal Government which are related to natural resources. This grouping of functions within one organization would logically provide for better administration of the functions if the underlying purpose of each of them were mainly the use and conservation of natural resources. We find this is not the case with the functions to be transferred from the Department.

While air pollution control and solid wastes disposal are related to natural resource management, they are much more directly concerned with the public health. The basic reason for studying and combatting them is because they jeopardize our very lives by polluting the environment in which we live. To combat them effectively we must determine how and why they affect our health and how we can alleviate the health hazards they create. This is mainly a public health problem which requires research in the health sciences and application of public health control measures. These efforts hold the key to our success or failure. The Public Health Service has been deeply involved in research, training, control activities, and other aspects of air pollution control. Transferring these important health functions from this Department would not enhance the Federal capability in this program, would seriously disrupt State and local program relationships, and would complicate the national health effort in this ~~therefore we believe it would be a wiser course to leave these functions with~~ ~~terring~~ Indian affairs.

The transfer of the Bureau to this Department would have some logic since a considerable portion of the Bureau's budget is allocated to activities in the fields of education and welfare and since this Department already administers