

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 1968

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND ASTRONAUTICS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, RESEARCH, AND DEVELOPMENT,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to adjournment, at 10:09 a.m., in room 2325, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., Hon. Emilio Q. Daddario (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. DADDARIO. This meeting will come to order. I would like all of our witnesses at this time to come forward, if you would: Dr. Weinberger, Dr. Pecora, who will be accompanied by Mr. Frank Clarke, and Mr. Everts. If you want to break in from time to time, gentlemen, you may do so.

Our hearings on environmental quality resume today with a discussion of water pollution. The concern of this subcommittee is that scientific and engineering resources be employed in a timely manner to assure a firm basis for administrative actions.

Water quality laws have preceded air pollution abatement by several years. States have now proposed standards for approval by the Federal Government. The adoption of these standards and the subsequent enforcement of abatement action will depend on the same sort of criteria which we have been studying in air pollution. The experience with the sequence of descriptive criteria leading to prescriptive standards under the water laws may be a valuable guide to research strategy for cleaner air.

The testimony we have received so far strengthens my feeling that improved waste management has been delayed because of wrangling arguments over the effects of contaminants in the environment and an inability to compare costs of abatement with benefits to air or water quality.

In water, as in air, the average citizen, industry, or local government has no trouble in reaching a decision to eliminate gross and obvious contamination. Floating matter, suspended particles, oil slicks, and foul smells in surface waters are being dealt with as quickly as facilities can be installed in most areas. Although further engineering development may increase capacity and efficiency in sewage and industrial waste treatment plants, abatement is not awaiting research results.

However, there is less certainly in dealing with subtle effects such as persistent chemicals in industrial effluents or the warm waters from a powerplant condenser. Particular problems, including mine drainage and eutrophication of lakes and estuaries add to the complexity of the overall water quality program.