

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1968

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to recess, at 10:20 a.m., in room 2325, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., Hon. Emilio Q. Daddario (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. DADDARIO. The subcommittee will come to order.

My apologies to you all for holding up the meeting, but my plane, which was supposed to have arrived an hour ago, just got here. It is important for us to get back to our home district, even in the middle of the week.

Dr. TAPE. I understand.

Mr. DADDARIO. This subcommittee has followed the development of civilian nuclear electric power reactors with considerable interest. The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and the Atomic Energy Commission are to be highly commended for the ambitious but thorough planning strategy which is apparent in the program.

Our study of environmental quality suggests that nuclear electric power could contribute significantly to pollution abatement. Not only would powerplant emissions be reduced compared to fossil-fuel combustion, but cheap power may lead to electrical space heating, thus eliminating small, hard-to-control combustion equipment.

But atomic energy labors under a number of doubts and constraints, some real and some based on emotion, whereas most water and air pollutants discussed in these hearings produce health effects only after substantial exposure. The release of virtually end radioactive materials into the environment is to be avoided. The reliability of nuclear waste management is thus a prime consideration, and the forecast of the growth of nuclear power means that we need confidence now that future wastes can be controlled.

If the research and development of long-term reactor waste management techniques can be shown to be proceeding at a proper pace, then atomic energy can take a major role in restoring and maintaining the quality of the environment.

Our witnesses today include Commissioner Gerald F. Tape, who is accompanied by Dr. Joseph A. Lieberman, Assistant Director for Nuclear Safety, Division of Reactor Development and Technology, AEC.

We are pleased to have both of you here. Since time is already short, we should proceed immediately.

(The biographies of Dr. Tape and Dr. Lieberman follow:)