

Perhaps the most difficult obstacle in getting new technology adopted and implemented is the reluctance of the public to accept solid waste disposal in the communities and the equally severe reluctance of communities to work cooperatively together to come up with one approach to solid waste management that is best for all the municipalities which make up a region or metropolitan area. People want their solid wastes problems solved but not near their home or near their community. Many small suburban communities know they could get by more economically by combining forces with others but many times prefer to go it alone to preserve their autonomy.

The Public Health Service through public information technology is trying to gain public recognition of the solid waste problems and gain public support for local solution to these problems. Certain demonstration projects such as the transformation of the Kenilworth dump to a model operation and land reclamation activity are designed to gain public support for proper solid waste management. A contract with the National Association of Counties is developing a program designed to educate public officials in solid waste needs, problems, and solutions.

Stimulating communities to work together on a regional or metropolitan basis is being approached by the Public Health Service's Solid Wastes Program through the mechanism of Study and Investigation grants to demonstrate how communities overcome the legal, interjurisdictional and public opinion difficulties in approaching their common solid waste problems on a regional basis. The regions being studied include metropolitan areas such as Louisville, Kentucky; Erie, Pennsylvania; New Orleans, Louisiana; Des Moines, Iowa; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. They also include entire counties such as Maricopa County, Arizona; Fresno County, California; Genesee County, Michigan; Jefferson County, Wisconsin; and Harrison County, Mississippi. Low population density regional areas are included such as the area near Farmington, Connecticut and Great Falls, Montana. The studies also include special regional areas such as the Tocks Island Recreational Area encompassing part of three states, several economically depressed counties in Appalachia, and the Quad-City area in New Jersey. The results of these studies will bring to light approaches which can be used by other communities with similar problems and similar circumstances thus improving psychometric technology and providing answers which quite frankly have us and most of the country stymied at the present time.

Many problem areas have been pointed out and our approach to their better understanding and solution. I am confident methods will be found which will allow air and water pollution control criteria to be met—methods which are technologically sound, economically feasible, and safe from the standpoint of protection of the public health and our environment.

Lest my remarks here today be interpreted as a deterrent to the use of current technology to solve existing solid waste management problems, let me set this issue straight right now. There are no legitimate reasons (except perhaps financial) to hold up the immediate elimination of open burning dumps, remodeling or replacement of antiquated incineration facilities without effective air pollution control devices, the abandonment of open broken-down collection vehicles which spew solid wastes along the route to the disposal site, and the cessation of feeding garbage to hogs. The Nation can improve its solid waste disposal practices and it can do it now. We have the technology to do it now—we are working to improve this technology and develop techniques which are not only more effective but are more economical. I feel personal sadness when I consider that the beautiful whooping crane is close to extinction and only heroic efforts have prevented it. On the other hand, I look forward with a great deal of zeal, enthusiasm, and pleasure when I consider one of the goals of the Solid Wastes Program—the elimination of the open burning dump from our society. This disgrace to humanity truly belongs to history not to our present and certainly not to our future.

In conclusion I would like to state that the Public Health Service is facing the Technological problems I have mentioned today with vigor and enthusiasm. Some of the approaches we are using will succeed and some will fail. We are confident, however, that their undertaking will furnish technological facts for more effective solid waste management and a better and cleaner America.

I appreciate the opportunity of discussing the solid waste management activities of the Public Health Service with you today.