

officials and government agencies of the dangers and consequences of such upsetting agents as air pollution, water pollution, excessive noise, urban blight, the population explosion. We do react to crises in our environment but we anticipate and avoid them only occasionally and haphazardly. Public awareness and interest in a problem is allowed to lag as soon as its critical stage has passed. We have not yet learned that we must consider the natural environment as a whole and assess its quality continuously if we really wish to make strides in improving and preserving it. In his recent message to the Congress on conservation, President Johnson said:

"Technology is not something which happens once and then stands still. It grows and develops at an electric pace. And our efforts to keep it in harmony with human values must be intensified and accelerated. Indeed, technology itself is the tool with which these new environmental problems can be conquered."

There have been many thoughtful proposals made on how to deal with the problem of our rapidly deteriorating environment. They have come from the scientific community, from government agencies, from private groups reflecting the varied concerns of their members. There have been suggestions ranging from the establishment of select Congressional subcommittees to the use of nongovernmental "environmental think tanks" or "resources intelligence agencies" to avoid any bias.

H.R. 7796, which I introduced on March 23, 1967, expresses my conviction that we need the vigorous involvement in this problem on the part of the Executive Office of the President of the United States. The underwriting of a national strategy for overall, long-term environmental management would guarantee continued public interest and willingness for long term planning. I propose that the President begin to submit to the Congress an annual report of the status of our natural resources coupled with an assessment of the current and anticipated trends of their utilization and the effects of such utilization on public health and welfare.

Such an assessment would make it possible for us to eliminate potential abuses at the source rather than having to undertake the costly and time consuming effort to control and abate an environmental insult after it has occurred. To issue a meaningful and accurate report, a great deal of information and knowledge must be gathered, beginning with an understanding of fundamental environmental and ecological factors which must be controlled in order to achieve and maintain a desirable and attainable environmental quality. We must develop a systematic approach toward maintaining a healthy and livable environment as a whole and abandon the idea of focusing our efforts on specific, isolated forms of environmental contamination.

To aid the President in accomplishing this task, I propose to create in the Executive Office of the President a Council on Environmental Quality composed of three members who, as a result of their education and training coupled with experience and personal accomplishments, would be exceptionally qualified to analyze and interpret environmental information, and assess remedial programs and activities in terms of immediate and long-range planning goals.

The Council would thus be the focal point for all new and authoritative data concerning the status and trends in environmental quality. It would interpret these data, analyze their usefulness and importance, and inform the President of their impact on the national ecology as a whole. Based on its findings, the Council would then make appropriate recommendations for Federal action designed to foster and improve environmental quality "to meet social, economic, and other requirements of the Nation."

I agree with those who maintain that Federal action alone is inadequate. I firmly believe that coordination and close contact must be maintained at all times with State and local agencies, industry, urban planners, agriculture, conservation groups, and the scientific community. I therefore recommend that the Council consult regularly with all these groups and make the fullest use of their services, facilities and information of all kinds. We need sustained, wholehearted public support for a program of this magnitude, and there is no better way of than to enlist the help and active understanding of every qualified individual.

There may not always be agreement on a good policy to follow. But there would at least be a consensus of what is bad in our environment. This, too, would give us a basis on which to select an effective remedial program.

Numerous agencies and departments are now engaged in extensive research, surveys, data collection and evaluations of ecological phenomena and the results of man-made manipulations of his natural environment. However, the Council would provide a top level, independent body, unencumbered by the demands and