

Mr. CARPENTER. But even separating combined sewers would not mean that you could swim, as I had gotten the picture, because of the amount of organic matter that would just be picked off of streets and lawns.

Dr. HIRSCH. Well, I would say two things about that. One is that when you say even separating, separation may not be, or would not be I am quite sure the full answer.

Mr. CARPENTER. Yes.

Dr. HIRSCH. We may not want to go to separation in all cases. We may hold the first flush of storm water and pump it back in and so on.

Mr. CARPENTER. Yes.

Dr. HIRSCH. Also the frequency of storms. If you can provide bathing nine-tenths of the time during the summer months, you are still far ahead.

Dr. WEINBERGER. May I interject a point here about this storm and combined sewage? I think there is perhaps a certain amount of misunderstanding concerning our ability to handle in an effective manner storm and combined sewer overflows. One of the ways of getting at this problem is separation of your combined sewers. When the presentation was developed it was a preliminary figure, and it was apparent that we were talking in terms of tens of billions of dollars. The strategy at that time was that it was worthwhile investing in R. & D. to come up with more economical solutions.

This does not mean that we have no way of handling the problem. And we have in the last 2 years supported a number of projects which led to the treatment of or otherwise reducing the pollutional effects of storm and combined sewer discharges.

This gets back to the point that these solutions cost money. I think we have to recognize that we will not have any zero cost solutions. I think this is where some of the confusion comes up. Because from an engineering point of view, we can do almost anything, and to suggest that we can't, I think, is just a horrible condemnation on American engineering or scientific capability.

These are communities who have in the past handled their storm and combined sewer problems, some in an effective manner. Some new ideas have been developed in the last couple of years and these are being supported as a part of our research and development grant program.

We do have projects to treat the wastes and come up with a quality that would not result in a deterioration of your receiving water.

Mr. BARNHILL. Another consideration that we made in recommending that we not go full scale ahead on separation was not only the costs that Dr. Weinberger referred to but the fact that this would be quite a time-consuming thing in the city of Washington, for example, over a substantial period of time.

Mr. CARPENTER. Yes.

Mr. BARNHILL. The streets in the city of Washington would be torn up for weeks on end. This is an inconvenience that probably no mayor can suffer through. It would in effect be changing the law to say—well, Mayor Washington is not elected, but they would be one-term mayors, believe me.

Mr. MOORE. Well, there is something else important here I think, and this is an overall philosophical viewpoint. The mere fact that it