

STATEMENT BY WESLEY E. GILBERTSON, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

I wish to associate myself with the very excellent statement for your Committee prepared by a fellow Pennsylvanian, Dr. Maurice K. Goddard, Secretary of the Department of Forests and Waters.

As Director of Environmental Health for the Commonwealth's Department of Health, control of environmental pollution represents a major area of responsibility for me and the Bureau staff. For the purpose of the record, I would like to emphasize the actions being taken by Pennsylvania to prevent and control water pollution due to mine drainage. During the past year, we have processed and approved several hundred mine drainage applications for permits which include provisions for treatment by the operators of mines so as to neutralize acid and remove iron from the discharges. These permits, covering installations now in active operation throughout the State, range in capacity from a few hundred gallons to hundreds of thousands of gallons per day. Thus, with respect to discharges from active mines and those being proposed, we believe that we have technologies which are economically feasible.

Discharges from abandoned mines, however, still constitute a serious economic question. In order to tackle this massive pollution problem, the Department of Health has prepared a "Ten-Year Mine Drainage Pollution Abatement Program for Abandoned Mines." This program describes in general terms the extent and character of the problem and provides preliminary estimates of cost of abatement, utilizing available technology. A copy of this report is attached.* It should be noted, however, that this report was issued on March 1, 1967. Since that time additional information has been developed which indicates that the total cost of abating pollution from abandoned mines in Pennsylvania will approximate \$1 billion. It is hoped that this information, together with that submitted by Dr. Goddard, will be useful to you in adjudging the availability of technology for pollution abatement with respect to pollutional discharges from mines.

I appeared before your Committee in the course of its previous hearings in 1966 and believe that your efforts in assessing research development and technology with respect to environmental pollution are of great benefit to the country. At the time of my previous appearance before you, I was in charge of the Department of HEW's new Solid Waste Program which had been underway only a few months before the hearings. Since that time I have become Director of Environmental Health in Pennsylvania. In my previous testimony I strongly emphasized the interrelationship between solid waste pollution problems and air and water pollution. I pointed out that satisfactory solutions to pollution control in any one phase of the environment must provide for adequate consideration for and protection of other phases of the

*The report referred to may be found in the Committee files.