

A report from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, dated August 21, 1967, addressed to Mr. Aspinall, signed by Secretary Robert C. Weaver.

In the absence of objection, all these will be made a part of the record in the order.

(The reports and letters referred to follow :)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D.C., February 18, 1967.

Hon. JOHN W. McCORMACK,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: The President, in his January 30, 1967 message to the Congress on protecting our natural heritage renewed his recommendation for legislation to establish a Nationwide System of Scenic Rivers similar to legislation the Department submitted to the 89th Congress. The need to act in order to preserve portions of our free-flowing rivers for the benefit of the American people is urgent. Unless we act promptly, growth and development will soon make the beauty of the unspoiled stretches of our scenic waterways merely a memory.

While river flows have been harnessed to aid navigation, control floods, increase farm productivity and hydroelectric power, too little attention has been given to the importance of protecting the very water we drink and the values of fish and wildlife, scenic and outdoor recreation resources. These values, although often measureless in commercial terms, should be preserved by a program that will guarantee America her heritage of unspoiled, unpolluted free-flowing rivers. Our belief is shared by a wide range of public and private authorities, and the time to act is now, before it is too late.

In 1962, the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission endorsed efforts to preserve certain rivers because of unique natural values they provide. Also in 1962, the President upon recommendation of the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Army, and the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, approved for application by them and by the Bureau of the Budget a policy statement concerning the use and development of water and related land resources. This policy statement provides, among other things, that in particular instances wild areas of rivers should be maintained and used for recreational purposes.

In 1963, this Department and the Department of Agriculture initiated a coordinated, broad-scale study of the need to preserve a nationwide system of scenic or wild rivers. This study revealed that a total of approximately 100,000 miles of rivers and tributaries in the United States averaging a flow of at least 550 cubic feet per second, only a few of the rivers could still be classified as relatively unspoiled. In a strict sense, a pristine river is a rare thing today in the United States. There are, however, many free-flowing rivers, or segments thereof, which still retain enough of their original character to provide the distinctive type of enjoyment and inspiration that increasing numbers of people are seeking. The sheer natural beauty of such river areas is a source of physical and spiritual refreshment.

The enclosed bill, which would establish a Nationwide System of Scenic Rivers, is similar to the proposal which the Department submitted to the 89th Congress. We urge that it receive early consideration. A detailed analysis of its provisions is set forth in an enclosure to this report.

Pertinent data with respect to the initial nine areas included by this bill in the System is enclosed.

The proposed legislation has been prepared in collaboration with the Secretary of Agriculture and has his approval.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that this proposed legislation is in accord with the program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY R. ANDERSON,
Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

Enclosures.