

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there would be no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY R. ANDERSON,
Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C., August 11, 1967.

HON. WAYNE N. ASPINALL,
*Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As you asked, here is our report on H.R. 90, H.R. 493, H.R. 3996, H.R. 6166, and H.R. 6588, "To reserve certain public lands for a National Scenic Rivers System, to provide a procedure for adding additional public lands and other lands to the system, and for other purposes", and on H.R. 8416, "To provide for a national scenic rivers system, and for other purposes."

In 1963, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior initiated a joint study of the Nation's scenic rivers. As an outgrowth of that study, the Secretary of the Interior sent to the 89th Congress, in 1965, a proposed bill to establish a National Wild Rivers System. H.R. 3996 is similar to that proposed bill.

After the close of the 89th Congress, we worked with the Department of the Interior in developing modified draft legislation to establish a Nationwide System of Scenic Rivers. On February 18, 1967, the Secretary of the Interior transmitted this modified proposal to the 90th Congress with the concurrence of this Department. H.R. 6166 is identical to the Administration's proposal. H.R. 6588 is nearly identical to H.R. 6166.

H.R. 90 and H.R. 493 are identical bills having a pattern similar to the Administration's proposal. However, they contain additional provisions that would recognize three classes of national scenic river areas, and would direct that each river be classified and managed according to the degree of accessibility, shoreline development, and freedom from impoundments.

H.R. 8416 is similar in principle to the Administration proposal. It also contains provisions that would classify the river areas according to their character.

The bills vary regarding rivers that would be designated for inclusion in an initial scenic rivers system, and that would be designated for future study.

H.R. 8416 has several desirable features. We recommend enactment of H.R. 8416, with the amendments referred to herein.

On page 2, line 20, we suggest that "or river segments" be inserted between "rivers" and "are". This makes it clear that different portions of designated scenic rivers may have different characteristics, and be classified accordingly.

We suggest that subsection 2 (b) (i) be amended to read as follows:

"(1) WILD RIVERS.—Free-flowing rivers located within designated units of the national wilderness preservation system and free-flowing rivers the valleys of which have been little changed by man and to which public access is limited except by trails."

The present language of H.R. 8416 would include in the Wild River type free-flowing rivers within "de facto" wilderness areas, and provides that such rivers should be managed in accordance with the concepts embodied in the Wilderness Act (78 Stat. 890). "De facto" wilderness is not defined by the bill. We are concerned that the use of this term would be construed as an inference of classification of large areas of undeveloped lands in the National Forests as "de facto wilderness" for management under the same restrictions on resource use as apply to wilderness areas designated under the Wilderness Act. Many of these areas are undeveloped simply because planned development has not reached them. In most cases they do not have the attributes of areas presently a part of or being reviewed for recommendation for inclusion in the Wilderness System. The Wilderness Act provides appropriate machinery to consider the possible inclusion of lands having wilderness character in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Subsection 2(c) (ii) of the bill provides that lands in High-Density Use Areas should be acquired in fee by the administering agency unless in the judgment of the Secretary of the Interior other methods of control are sufficient. Since this Department and other agencies will also be administering such areas, we recommend that the last sentence in this subsection be amended to read: