

These bills are quite similar, except for H.R. 7020, and would provide for the establishment of a National Scenic Rivers System for the preservation and restoration of selected rivers or sections of rivers in their free-flowing condition to protect water quality and outdoor recreational values. H.R. 7020 would provide for the conservation and administration of the Buffalo River in Arkansas. It is noted that this river is also named in H.R. 90 and H.R. 493 for inclusion in the National Scenic Rivers System.

This Department endorsed the establishment of a National Scenic Rivers System for the preservation and restoration of selected rivers or sections of rivers in their free-flowing condition. Such a scenic rivers system would, we believe, enhance the Nation's health and welfare through the conservation of resources and the provision of recreational areas in various parts of the country.

Each of these bills, with the exception of H.R. 7020, would provide for consultation with other interested Federal agencies with respect to certain aspects of the National Scenic Rivers System. This Department through the Public Health Service would expect to be involved in matters relating to the health aspects associated with the establishment and administration of the scenic rivers program, should this legislation be enacted.

While we are in accord with the broad objectives of this legislation, we defer to the views of the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior concerning their specific provisions, as the administration of the National Scenic Rivers System would be vested in these officials.

We note that in section 5(c) of H.R. 3996 relating to water pollution control, reference is made to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. We believe that the Secretary of Interior is intended here as the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration was transferred from this Department to the Department of Interior by Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1966.

We are advised by the Bureau of the Budget that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

WILBUR J. COHEN,
Under Secretary.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D.C., August 11, 1967.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to your request to the Secretary of Defense for the views of the Department of Defense on H.R. 90, 90th Congress, a bill "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 twelve other bills for the same and related purposes. The Department of the Army has been assigned responsibility for expressing the views of the Department of Defense on this bill, and related bills.

The general purposes of these bills are stated in the titles thereof. Similar proposals were put forth in both Houses of the 89th Congress.

The principal interest of the Department of Defense in such proposals is in their relation to the water resources activities of the Department of the Army and the Corps of Engineers.

The Department of the Army fully recognizes the desirability of preserving certain rivers in their natural state, believes that there is a need for legislation for that purpose, and fully supports the objectives of such legislation.

The basic position of the Department of the Army on the numerous bills which have been introduced with a view to setting aside certain streams as "wild", or "scenic", rivers may be stated briefly as follows:

First, that the Nation can well afford to forgo the development of streams of unusual natural beauty.

Second, that since decisions to set aside such streams must be based largely upon intangible factors, and since the evaluation of such factors is primarily a matter of legislative judgement, the Congress should decide which of the Nation's streams should be preserved in their natural state.

Third, that if Congress is to reach a wise decision it must have a full report and definite plan for each potential wild river, and that this plan should be