

Be it therefore resolved, by the Washburn County Board of Supervisors, that they favor legislation providing for the establishment of a St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway in the States of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN D. DINGELL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, for the record, my name is John D. Dingell and I am a Member of Congress from the Sixteenth District of Michigan. I welcome this opportunity to present my statement in support of the bill, H.R. 493, which I introduced on January 10, 1967. The purpose of my bill can best be described, I believe, by quoting from President Johnson's message on Natural Beauty. The President said: " * * * the time has also come to identify and preserve free-flowing stretches of our great scenic rivers before growth and development make the beauty of the unspoiled waterway a memory."

The need for Congressional action is urgent. As Secretary of Interior Stewart L. Udall said in his report to Congress, "The time to act is now, before it is too late."

A study launched by the Department of Agriculture in 1963 reported that we have in the United States approximately 100,000 miles of rivers and tributaries that average a flow of at least 550 cubic feet a second. But the truly wild, unspoiled river is almost a thing of the past. There are, however, several free-flowing rivers or segments that still retain enough of their original character, or which can be restored, to provide the distinctive type of outdoor enjoyment and inspiration that millions of Americans seek every year.

Many of these waterways also have historical significance. In the era of early settlement and exploration, they were the pathways used to open up the country. Under the provisions of my bill, these historical values would be preserved and protected.

In drafting H.R. 493, I purposely made it broad in scope, broader in fact than some of the other scenic rivers bills that have been introduced. My bill designates segments of 16 rivers as scenic river areas; whereas, some of the other bills include fewer rivers. In addition, I want to point out that H.R. 493 provides for orderly classification and subsequent development of the scenic rivers included. It also provides for systematic additions to the system over 5 and 10 year periods.

At this point, I think we should carefully consider the growing demand for outdoor recreation and open space, for these factors are an important part of the scenic rivers proposal. In the United States we anticipate that by 1975, water-based recreation needs will increase by 170 percent over what they were in 1960, and by 400 percent by the year 2000.

In discussing this same challenge, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman had this to say: "Every year, 9 out of 10 Americans—some 175 million of us—are on the move in search of outdoor fun—places to picnic, swim, hunt, fish, play, or just to relax and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. Great as the demand for such facilities already is, we expect it to triple by the end of this century."

"This growth will flow from four major factors: (1) population, expected to nearly double by the year 2000; (2) disposable income, likely to quadruple; (3) leisure time, to increase by one-third; and (4) auto travel, headed for a fourfold increase over present levels."

This, the Secretary said, is the dimension of the recreation challenge.

While affirming his belief that the challenge can and will be met, he warned, "There is one sure way to fail to meet it—that is by attempting to resolve the recreation challenge by itself. We cannot meet it piecemeal. We can adequately meet it only in the context of the total environmental challenge."

Suburban sprawl and megalopolis are also serious problems. Every year we are losing two million acres of rural area to urban use. The bulldozers and subdividers are gobbling up green space and converting it to jungles of asphalt and concrete at an alarming rate to provide for the population pile up. Somehow we must find a way to strike a balance. Somehow we must find a way to retain a part of "America, the Beautiful" while there is yet time.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I see our scenic rivers as a vital part of America's future—a vital part of Countryside, U.S.A. Therefore, I urge enactment of H.R. 493 to assure unspoiled, unobstructed waterways for all of us, now and for those to come in the years ahead.