

in Virginia and at Dunreith, Indiana, as they occur and before they do great damage. Immediate action is important for containment, and for the control of spills of hazardous substances.

The clean-up authority is similar to that applicable to oil. It is not, however applicable to all discharge of matter, but only to those of sufficient quantity to warrant a finding by the Secretary of the Interior that the discharge or threatened discharge presents an imminent and substantial hazard to the public health or welfare.

Control of Pollution from Vessels

Vessels—watercraft of widely varying types—are included in the category of the migratory polluter. Sanitary wastes, litter, bilge pumpage, and polluted ballast discharges are among the kinds of pollutants emanating from these sources. Watercraft wastes are highly visible, offensive to the senses, and often have a pollution effect disproportionate to their quantity. H.R. 13923 and H.R. 16207 embody the legislative action which we believe is required to mount a comprehensive attack on vessel pollution.

Pollution of waters by watercraft discharges is widespread. Boats and vessels move from point to point in the Nation's waters and may cause local pollution at any point in their travels. Pleasure craft gathering for a weekend of fun or during a holiday, may suddenly impose a load of untreated wastes on receiving waters equivalent to those from a small community. Vessels traveling to and from foreign ports may well transport organisms which can reinfect our environment.

Today, there are approximately 46,000 documented commercial vessels, 65,000 nondocumented commercial fishing vessels, 1,500 Federal vessels, and 8,000,000 recreational watercraft using the navigable waters of the United States. There are, in addition, almost 40,000 foreign ship entrances through Customs recorded each year in these waters. The 8,000,000 recreational watercraft are served by some 5,500 marinas, many with satellite facilities such as restaurants, boatels, and shore-based sanitary facilities located across the Nation.

The following pollution problems stem from these watercraft sources:

Public health is threatened.—I quote an excerpt from a January 1968 report by the U.S. Public Health Service: "The fecal material from boats has a much different public health significance than municipal sewage, whether treated or untreated. Fresh fecal material contains pathogens which when introduced into the growing area have not had time to become less viable as those in a sewage system." Paraphrased, pathogens (i.e., disease causing organisms) are more active in fecal material from watercraft than those discharged from municipal sewage systems due to the freshness of such discharges.

Shellfish harvesting is curtailed.—For reasons of pathogen concentration by the shellfish, some States (Virginia as an example) prohibit shellfish harvesting where there is appreciable watercraft traffic nearby.

Drinking water for millions of Americans can be threatened by waste discharges from watercraft.—Except where the Interstate Quarantine Regulations prohibit the discharge of vessel wastes, including bilge and ballast waters in close proximity to a public water supply intake on the Great Lakes, there is no protection under existing Federal authority for the many water supplies drawn from our inland waterways and other lakes.

The aesthetic character of our waterways may be threatened or destroyed.—The total number of boat passages is almost countless. Yet, all boats serve as possible vehicles for litter pollution during each and every passage. Uncounted tons of refuse and trash from these floating platforms wash up on pleasure beaches and the bottom shore lines of our lakes, rivers, estuaries and coastline. Further, the unsightliness of floating fecal material in contact water sport areas needs no elaboration.

No single control mechanism of watercraft pollution exists today over this Nation's waterways. To be sure, there is some State regulation, but this is, for the most part, imperfect and certainly nonuniform. The inadequacy of these controls can be demonstrated by the needs of watercraft using public waterways.

A barge tow plowing its way down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans may pass through the jurisdiction of 11 States.

A coastal freighter may touch as many as 25 harbors in 20 State jurisdictions between Portland, Maine, and Portland, Oregon.

The pleasure boater, whose number is increasing by more than 200,000 owners per year, poses the same problem since the ubiquitous boating public often travels or trailers watercraft from one jurisdiction to another.