

Control Act of 1968, before you as H.R. 15906 and identical bills, addresses itself to additional key areas not covered in S. 2760. S. 2760 and H.R. 15906 are complementary. They do not overlap, but, taken together, they extend our ability to control oil pollution to the contiguous zone, the 9-mile strip of ocean beyond our territorial waters, which was established by an international convention on September 10, 1964.

The bill would further provide for the cleanup of large or unusually hazardous discharges of pollutants other than oil. The Water Quality Act of 1965 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to request the Attorney General to bring suit to secure abatement of pollution which reduces the quality of interstate waters below established water quality standards. However, the legal procedure necessarily delays abatement action for at least 6 months. Thus, the Federal Government now lacks authority to cope with large and unusually hazardous discharges of material, such as those which occurred recently on the Clinch River in Virginia and at Dunreith, Ind., 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 cleanup 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

I then move on to legislation proposed for the 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.

I am going to skip over to the top of page 16, Mr. Chairman, to talk about the details of this legislation.

This bill would apply to foreign and domestic vessels, and to the navigable waters and the contiguous zone. The bill would direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish by regulation, standards for the control of sewage emitting from vessels.

The standards will be developed after an extensive investigation and research effort is carried out to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of various systems for the treatment of sewage from vessels, including a careful study of the costs of installing, operating, and maintaining such systems on various classes of vessels.

The standards will be as uniform as possible for various classes of vessels within similar circumstances.

The regulations will set reasonable compliance schedules.

The bill would direct the Secretary to prescribe regulations governing the discharge of ballast and bilge water into such waters from vessels engaged in commerce.