

RESPECTIVE ROLES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES IN OIL POLLUTION SITUATIONS

Mr. McCARTHY. It just seems to me, from my own experience, too, in Buffalo, that the Coast Guard is really a key agency in this. You do have the communications, the experience, the facilities.

I do think it should be spelled out, if you can possibly do it, because the way it is now it is rather ambiguous.

Admiral TRIMBLE. Well, the proposals in the bills before you do place the responsibility specifically in the Department of Interior, so the bill does attempt to spell out the responsibility.

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. McEwen?

Mr. McEWEN. Mr. Chairman, on that point, you have seen a copy of H.R. 15906?

Admiral TRIMBLE. Yes, sir.

Mr. McEWEN. On page 5, sir, paragraph (g), as I read it, it says this section will be enforced by the Interior Department and the Secretary of the Department under which the Coast Guard is then operating. Apparently the author of the bill anticipates the Coast Guard might be moved around at some future time. But it places, as I read it here, the enforcement in the Secretary under which the Coast Guard is operating, and the Secretary of the Interior, with or without agreement of law enforcement officers, other Federal agencies, et cetera, et cetera, and it seems to be a joint responsibility.

Admiral TRIMBLE. The responsibility is placed in the Secretary of the Interior and he may delegate any part of this responsibility to the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating.

Mr. McEWEN. The wording:

Shall be enforced by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is under.

Admiral TRIMBLE. That only deals with the enforcement. That is not the agreement.

The enforcement responsibility is in the Secretary, Department of Transportation, after consultation with the Secretary of Interior. There is no question about that.

Mr. McEWEN. Again, Admiral, the language, you are quite right, it has to do with enforcement, not the cleanup, but the language of that, as I read it, is joint. It does not place it in either the Secretary of Interior or Secretary of Transportation. It says:

Shall be enforced by the Secretary of Interior and by the Department under which the Coast Guard is operated.

Admiral TRIMBLE. Yes, sir.

Mr. McEWEN. Is it your understanding, however, that that enforcement was to be carried out by the Secretary of Interior in this case, or the Secretary of Transportation?

Admiral TRIMBLE. In this particular section you are referring to, it is joint.

Mr. McEWEN. It is joint?

Admiral TRIMBLE. Yes, sir; if you look on page 7 under subsection (j), first, the Secretary, that means Secretary of Interior, shall issue regulations in consultation with the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating, covering conservation objectives and standards in removing oil discharge in the contiguous zone. Then