

in itself clean up the water. Only if the timetable in the enforceable plan is adhered to will standard setting bring about stream cleanup. To meet the timetable, interceptor sewers and treatment plants must be enlarged, improved, and new ones constructed on schedule. If some sizeable physical improvements move forward rapidly, enforcement of standards will be encouraged. If standards are not enforced, the entire standard setting operation will be no more than a paper exercise.

*Metropolitan areas need special attention*

The League fully supports the provision in H.R. 15907 that limits the contract method to all or parts of standard metropolitan areas or to large population centers. We favor earmarking the larger share of the authorized amount for contractual obligations with standard metropolitan statistical areas or large cities.

The construction grant program was begun to help towns and small cities. States decide to whom the state allocation of federal construction grant funds shall go—and in what percentage of project costs. Some states spread their allocations thinly, small percentages to many recipients. Prior to 1966, the dollar ceiling on project grants made extremely large projects ineligible for aid proportionate to their cost. During the time the construction grant program has been in effect, the disproportion between the income of some center cities and the needs they must fill has become glaringly clear.

To bring about substantial reduction of the vast amounts of pollution many big cities discharge into their waterways, we favor channeling federal and state funds into metropolitan areas for at least the three years of the present authorizations.

*Utility-type financing is desirable*

The League supports the requirement that the local public body having jurisdiction over the treatment works be required, as a condition for contract aid, to establish a system of charges to repay the capital costs and pay the operating and maintenance costs over the life of the project. We think businesslike financing, with service charges related to the cost of supplying the service, is desirable. We are glad to see that the requirement is left flexible, for we think the end may be achieved in different ways in different cities and states. Where domestic sewage service is included in water charges or in special millage rates on the tax bill, for example, it may be satisfactory to continue these methods of collecting service charges.

User charges will grow more important as industries attach to public sewer lines in increasing numbers. We think adequate rates based on quality and quantity of sewage should be charged for waste water service, as charges are made in relation to services rendered by other utilities.

*Operation of treatment plants needs improvement*

League members' work for local and state bond issues makes them eager to have the large investment in treatment facilities produce the best possible results. We are well aware that many treatment plants have never done as well as expected and that many are overloaded. Our members have been dismayed to discover the low qualifications of operators in some expensive plants. The League, therefore, fully supports the provision in H.R. 15907 that in order to make use of the contract method of federal aid, a state must develop a statewide plan to improve the efficiency of all constructed treatment works and must establish an effective statewide program for certification of treatment plant operators. We think an important function of grants-in-aid is to encourage the recipient level to upgrade performance.

*Estuary values merit study*

The League supports funding a comprehensive study of estuaries. We are concerned about the values of these areas where salt and fresh water come together and about the values of the surrounding wetlands. Choices must be made between alternative uses. It is important that these be informed choices. The report of study outlined in this bill will help supply the information decision-makers will need.

RESERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT H.R. 15907

Although the League will support H.R. 15907 for the reasons just given, we have reservations and questions about some of the proposed provisions and language in the bill.