

tremely 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 3 years of the present authorizations.

USER CHARGES

Third, 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.

DESIGN AND OPERATION OF PLANTS—OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

Fourth, 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 STUDY

Lastly, 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 decisionmakers will need.

RESERVATIONS

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.

PREFINANCING CUTOFF

First of all, our chief objection is to the change in the date which shortens the time during which construction must be started if a plant