

viduals who, when combined with associate members and other supporters of the National Wildlife Federation number an estimated 2½ million persons.

We welcome the invitation to appear here today.

Conservation organizations long have been among the groups which are leading a battle against man's contamination of his own environment. The National Wildlife Federation, in annual convention in March of this year, adopted a resolution listing what it considers to be the major issues of 1968. Environmental contamination heads the list. Our organization emphasizes its urgent concern about this contamination by water and air pollutants, by toxic chemicals used as pesticides and for other purposes, by solid wastes, and by noise—problems which are being aggravated by increases in the human population. These situations not only present hazards to the health of man and other creatures, but damage or destroy the quality of life experiences, including those found in the out-of-doors. We believe it is essential that massive efforts be launched to control water and air pollution, to plan and use the least harmful means of disposing of wastes, and to minimize or eliminate the ill effects resulting from the use of chemical pesticides. This resolution specifically comments: "In controlling water pollution, it is viewed as essential that Federal and State agencies adopt standards designed ultimately to attain high levels of water quality, recognizing when necessary that they may not be achieved in the immediate future, rather than establishing low levels of quality which are difficult to upgrade." The Federation also states its belief that the Federal Water Pollution Control Act can be improved through additional provisions designed to correct problems relating to the accelerated aging of lakes, mine acids, oil, and heat.

I might digress long enough here to express our gratitude and commendation to Members of this Committee for the extremely valuable leadership they have exerted in drawing attention throughout the Country to needs for controlling all contamination of the environment, particularly water pollution. When one recalls that the entire Federal construction grants program was in real jeopardy only ten years ago, the amounts of money involved in discussions about H.R. 15907 are truly remarkable and your Committee certainly merits plaudits for playing a most significant role in this progress. We were highly elated when, in 1966, major new increases were authorized in the construction grants program. In fact, at the time, we supported even greater authorizations. Therefore, our disappointment was keen when less than one-half of the authorized funds were appropriated for fiscal 1968 or sought for fiscal 1969. This disappointment exists even though we fully realize the magnitude of the competition for Federal funds for many other programs, especially national defense and urban improvements.

In view of the foregoing, we would like to endorse the principles expressed in H.R. 15907, the proposed "Water Quality Improvement Act of 1968."

LONG-TERM FINANCING

As we read the bill, it would allow the Federal Government for three years to obligate itself through contracts for long-term (up to 30 years) commitments to bear its share of the cost of constructing municipal waste treatment works. We also understand that the Federal Government would pay off both principal and interest in these payments. We are in accord with this method of financing and certainly hope it will prove sufficiently attractive to investors that there will be no difficulties in securing the necessary monies. Of course, we also are hopeful that the crises will be alleviated to the point where advance financing of this sort is not necessary and grants can be made outright for the full authorizations each year.

It goes without saying, Mr. Chairman, that we also hope the full authorization for \$700 million can be approved for fiscal 1969 under this type of arrangement.

ADDED REQUIREMENTS

We believe the requirements that the local public body be financially stable and approved are good ones. However, while not being opposed, we must admit that we do not fully understand or appreciate the rationale for the requirement relating to areas of 125,000 persons or more or to a standard statistical area.

It is sound, in our opinion, for the Federal Government to insist upon an effective statewide treatment works operator certification program. There is no question that many treatment plants are operated far below their potential