

ESTUARINE STUDY

The League has deep concern with the protection of estuarine areas for maximum production of fish and shellfish, recreation and esthetic values. Water pollution in all its forms is the basic threat to the Nation's estuaries. H.R. 15907 makes no substantive change in the provisions of the 1966 Act for the study of estuarine pollution, but it does extend the report date to January 30, 1970 and makes the funds appropriated for the study available until expended. Both are desirable amendments.

Mr. Chairman, from the beginning we have given strong support to the research, demonstration, investigations and training grants provisions of the Federal program. We now support Section 6 of H.R. 15907 which we understand makes no substantive changes in the present Act, but revises, clarifies and extends the provisions of Sections 5 and 6 of the present Act, and places no limit on appropriations after FY 1969.

THERMAL POLLUTION

It seems to the Izaak Walton League, Mr. Chairman that the restructuring of Sec. 6, while making no substantive changes, points up the growing emphasis on research and related activities and on systematic and prompt dissemination of research findings and data. We agree that there should be this emphasis. There is no question but that the country should accelerate its efforts to discover and develop improved methods to measure the effects of pollutants on water uses and to develop better systems for treating sewage and other water borne wastes to remove maximum possible amounts of physical, chemical and biological pollutants.

We have but one fear, and it is an old fear with which conservationists have had a lot of experience over the years; that is the argument that action to abate pollution, using best present knowledge, be delayed until some time later when some research has been accomplished. The ultimate knowledge will never be achieved, if only because of population growth, increased complexities of society, the goods and services it requires and the creation of more sophisticated wastes. We support research in all its ramifications, but we do not want the research effort used as an excuse for not doing what science and technology knows how to do today.

One specific illustration of this undesired potential is the use of augmented stream flow to meet water quality standards. Sec. 6, Subsection (a)(6) provides that the Secretary shall develop improved methods "to evaluate the effects on water quality and water uses of augmented stream flows to control water pollution not reasonably susceptible to other means of abatement".

A person need only review the transcripts of State hearings on water quality standards required by the Water Quality Act of 1965 to find endless testimony urging stream flow augmentation as the "practical" alternative to construction of waste treatment facilities. We don't think this is an acceptable or practical alternative. We do agree that the kinds of information such evaluations would provide, in the long run, will be important to sound and effective management to the total water resource. We reject in principle that it be used by anyone to avoid responsibility for his own wastes.

This is clearly a matter of proper administration of the Act rather than the language of the bill, Mr. Chairman, but we think it warrants mention before this Committee.

Another matter of concern to the League, though not directly germane to the legislation before you is thermal pollution and particularly the no-man's land of thermal pollution from nuclear power generators licensed by the Atomic Energy Commission. AEC states it has no authority to even consider thermal pollution. The Interior Department has no authorities in the licensing procedures. Yet, thermal pollution from such plants is a live threat. The prospects for the proliferation of nuclear plants are large. Authorities and responsibilities should be clearly spelled out and assigned promptly, and before the problem gets way ahead of us.

WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

In conjunction with thermal and other water quality standards and with expanded research on criteria indicated, we have been happy to hear the Secretary expound on the principle that approved standards be set within safe limits,