

It is a pleasure to join with representatives of other national conservation organizations in this discussion of the problems and opportunities in water pollution abatement. The many proposals before the committee are an indication of the national importance that is attached to this subject. Water is one of the most fundamental of our nation's resources; it touches on every facet of society. Its substantial role in guiding the settlement and development of this country continues today, but that role is being altered significantly by the constant expansion of population, the unprecedented demands for water for all kinds of consumptive and non-consumptive purposes, and the awesome outpouring of municipal, agricultural, industrial, and other wastes.

Today, as never before, water can limit growth and development. This is because the natural capacity of water to assimilate society's wastes has been exceeded in many areas and the values associated with and derived from water are decreasing or have, in fact, been greatly diminished. In numerous areas, water has been degraded to the point that it is no longer tolerable to society. Municipalities and development commissions are concerned because industry is finding water too dirty for use and too costly to reclaim, so industry is going beyond traditional locations in many instances for installation sites. The public is showing increasing intolerance of unsightly and offensive waters. The man on the street is taking an active role in promoting clean water campaigns, and sizeable bond issues have been authorized all over the country in support of needed pollution abatement programs. There also is mounting evidence that the accumulations of technical materials, such as pesticides, have implications on aquatic life that are not clearly understood. In fact, involvement of pesticides with coho salmon in Lake Michigan demonstrates that tremendous damage can be done to the natural aquatic environment before the consequences become obvious to man.

All of this is part of man's awakening and responsive interest in the restoration and maintenance of the quality of his environment. People have seen the unnecessary and disheartening consequences of man's wasteful misuse of resources. They also have experienced the benefits that can be achieved from the management and restoration of resources. I believe that the chairman and the members of the committee will agree that the national interest in restoring and preserving the quality of the environment is intensifying each year. Many of us also appreciate that this committee and the Congress has been responsive to this national concern since there have been repeated and successful efforts to strengthen and broaden appropriate federal authority to cope with the serious environmental pollution problems. Our presence here today is an indication that still more must be done.

I will confine my remarks, Mr. Chairman, to the general subject of the pollution of water from ships and other watercraft. In discussing the invitation to appear before the committee as a panel, the conservation groups decided that they could be of most assistance by discussing specific areas of concern rather than by attempting to cover each of the many bills in detail. This procedure held the most promise of avoiding repetition and focusing attention on the major issues. For this reason, the Institute's remarks will center on pollution from watercraft. I am sure the committee realizes that the Institute supports and endorses the comments of the other conservation organizations represented here.

As I observed earlier, water had a major role in influencing the pattern of settlement and development of this country. The ports, bays, harbors, and channels which experience a heavy vessel traffic usually are located in areas having concentrations of people, industry, and commerce. Additionally, water is the focal point of much outdoor recreation, and these same areas near concentrations of people are used for sailing and other recreational boating, including the use of boats for fishing, as well as for swimming and other water sports.

It makes little sense to conservationists for municipalities and industries along these waters to be required to treat their wastes when, at the same time, there is no corresponding requirement that vessels refrain from discharging ballast, bilge and wash waters, or sewage, oils, litter and other pollutants into the same waters. The goal of pollution abatement programs is to abate pollution so as to effectively reduce the volume of pollutants entering natural waters. The continued discharge of pollutants and other wastes from watercraft only complicates an already complicated pollution abatement problem in navigable waters.

The situation is further intensified by the mobile nature of the vessels that are discharging the pollutants and by the great diversity of materials that are involved. The vessels move into areas that already have critical pollution problems and can greatly aggravate conditions there. In a similar way, large fleets of