

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Congressman Jones made a most important point on Tuesday when he asked whether the solid waste disposal problem is being integrated into the water quality program. He correctly noted that solid waste is the growing problem and unless our regulations on water quality properly assess this aspect we can be creating an even greater problem in the near future. Governor Rockefeller gave his endorsement to this.

Some specific solid waste problems demand immediate attention from this committee because the public clamor has effectively curtailed factual development of answers. The first is the increasing sewage sludge disposal and the second is the disposal of dredged material from harbors. A third problem is the disposal of residue from cities and industries and this include trash, garbage and solids such as fly ash.

The public has become so conditioned to demands that no materials of any kind be permitted to discharge to our waterways that it has endorsed crusades by newspapers that no dredged material or sewage sludges be permitted to be dumped in either lakes or oceans. The solution in their opinion is simple—use land disposal or diked area disposal.

However, Mr. Jones is correct. This solution is simple now but its effects are irrevocable so that the issue should be appraised fully.

Filling in the marsh lands can have a greater effect on the ecology of the lake than dumping the material into the lake. The marshes are natural sponge balancing entities and provide habitat for aquatic life. Also, when material is piled on shore or close to shore in diked areas, the rain causes a continuous leeching of the salts to the lake. If these salts are nutrients, the algal growths in the shallow shore waters can be tremendous. The increased cost of disposing of dredged material can thus be followed by a further increase in costs in later years. However, if the site in the lake is selected properly and the dredged material is cohesive, bottom dumping can result in compacted material which does not become available for effect on the lake quality. Such a program was being fully evaluated in Lake Erie and Michigan when the Corps of Engineers, at FWPCA insistence, cut it off. This study should be completed before this committee has to determine which ports cannot be maintained because of cost of dredging and unavailability of disposal sites.

H.R. 15907—S. 3206

This bill has three major parts: new financing, estuarial studies, and research.

The last—research, investigation, training and information—is a revision of the present law on this subject. Essentially, it would give the Secretary more discretionary authority on what should be researched. This appropriation of \$125,000,000 is more than half the scheduled construction grant authorization, and would be a continuing deal so as to remove the review by this committee of the results of the authorization.

One of the very real disappointments under the federal law been the dearth of fruit from the research and demonstration monies. The committee could well inquire for:

1. A list of the research projects now funded with the detail of when the project was approved, when the first monies were paid the recipient, how much has been paid in toto, what the completion date was (or is) and what reports have been received on the findings as well as the dissemination of the findings.
2. How many applications FWPCA has now, how many are similar or related to the same objective, how long the application has been in hand, how many have been reported to the applicant as worthy, and how many have been promised as approvable once monies are appropriated.
3. A listing of the stipulations and requirements by FWPCA to the recipient of a contract before and after the contract is approved.
4. A listing of the field applications and the benefits of such application of findings financed from this program.

The research section as rewritten in this bill also suggests a conflict with the Executive Directive which, in response to the Bureau of the Budget demands, would cut down on duplication of collecting water quality data. This bill (Sec. 6(a)(4)) would give FWPCA a directive to do what U.S. Geological Survey is now doing.