

APPROVAL OF STATES' WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

Mr. BLATNIK. The gentleman from New York is recognized.

Mr. McEWEN. Mr. Secretary, during your testimony here on April 23, you informed us that the standards for 31 States have been approved. Have those been published as yet in the Federal Register?

Secretary UDALL. Apparently the answer as of the moment is "No," but our plans are underway to do that.

Mr. McEWEN. Because it was in the Federal Register February 7 that I noticed over your signature there is a notice on water quality standards.

In fact, Mr. Secretary, have any of the 31 been definitely cited as approved without any exceptions or any exclusions?

Secretary UDALL. Yes, there have been several. The approach that we have taken generally—and I think it is a wise approach is this. We began a year ago, Congressman, with the idea that in terms of approving State standards, what we should be seeking is to have a State present something, let us rubber stamp it and approve it and send it back to them. It has since been decided that this whole problem of standards is an ongoing problem, because technology is changing. These are water quality standards, the States will want to raise them.

AREAS RESERVED FROM APPROVAL

This is going to be an ongoing process. Therefore, the procedure that we have been following is generally not to just say, "Here they are, they are approved," and send them back to them, but we found many instances where there are special problems, and you can describe these as exceptions or you can describe them simply as problems that we single out, where we indicate to them where we will be studying these matters further and refining the details on standards. So what we are giving back to the States is not a flat outright 100-percent approval. We say: Your standards are approved. But we then single out in most of these maybe three or four or five problems, whatever there may be, and we indicate to them that we feel that there should be further work in refining the standards on these matters, and that we are reserving the right to further consult with them before final action is taken.

There is another series of actions that we have taken where we singled out major problems in some river basins—the salinity problem in the Colorado Basin, the thermal problem in another basin. We specifically told the States we were not going to make the decision on these matters, that we were going to study with them at considerable length before a final decision is reached. This is the kind of approach.

MAY STATES ACT WITH RELIANCE ON STANDARDS AS APPROVED?

Mr. McEWEN. Mr. Secretary, what assurance does the State have—you used the phrase here, this is an ongoing matter and as technology develops, and so forth, that these things will be reviewed.

In my own State of New York, I know you are familiar, we have had a thorough classification of all of the lakes and streams of this area pursuant to our law. Water quality standards were established