

This is the primary reason that we feel at this time that S. 217 and S. 3126, which deal with the reclamation of the already damaged lands, are more appropriately subjects for later consideration.

We in the Department of the Interior believe that in many situations it is possible for society to benefit both from the use of the minerals of the land and from the use of the land itself after mining operations have been completed.

One of the essentials in this is a recognition that proper mining practice today includes reclamation—not that reclamation merely is some follow-up treatment after the mining is done.

This was not the general practice in the past. The Nation must be assured from now on that good mining practice is used and that the possibility of damage off the site of the mine itself also is taken into consideration in the mining operation. This was not, of course, the general practice in the past.

The public recognizes the need for mineral commodities, and that they do not occur in economic deposits everywhere. Good land use planning can enable mining to continue while providing protection and reclamation of other natural resources. With such foresight, many areas from which minerals are extracted will lend themselves to subsequent uses.

These concepts are not really new; what is new is that their validity has been confirmed by our nationwide study which gave attention not only to the ravage of past mining, but also to the assessment of current conditions and to the future possibilities.

As is evident to even the casual reader of our reports, it is recommended that a Federal surface mining program include the repair of past damage. But, in a time of hard priorities it becomes most important that we assure reclamation of future mined land.

As we note in the report, a public dollar spent to assure the prevention of future damage can be many times more effective than one spent on repairing lands already damaged. I think I have already made it plain, probably because I see no other way to get the job done, that the way we are going to repair the damage of the past—representing the old policy of, in effect, letting future generations pay the bill—is for the Federal Government to do that job.

Essentially, however, what we are proposing, if the states will cooperate and we can have a national program now, is that industry will do its reclaiming work and pass the cost on as part of the price of the product of acquiring these minerals for the Nation, so that we won't present some future generation with a big bill for the way we carry our mining activities today.

We believe that by means of the procedures proposed in S. 3132, we shall attain a method of determining the relative benefits of various land use alternatives, prior to mining. For a given mining site at a given time these alternatives might be:

- (a) surface mining without reclamation;
- (b) surface mining with reclamation;
- (c) underground mining only;
- (d) no mining whatsoever.

Based upon our national survey, we expect that instances will be found where surface mining should not be permitted at present because there is no technically feasible way of avoiding undue damage