

operating mines utilizing current mining practices. Our position was so expressed at a meeting with Department of Interior officials at the American Mining Congress Convention in Denver last September.

The Interior Department report states that an estimated 3.2 million acres of land in the Nation have been disturbed by surface mining. One would assume from a casual glance at table 1 on page 110 of the report that this was "as of January 1, 1965," or in other words, of recent origin. In actual fact, this tabulation goes back perhaps to the beginning of our Nation. It is doubtful that any observer could see, today, where gold was mined in Virginia or where iron ore was mined in Ohio. Yet such acreages are included in the report.

Leaving aside for the moment the validity of the statistics, the report states that, of this 3.2 million acres, 95 percent is attributable to but seven commodities: coal, 41 percent; sand and gravel, 26 percent; stone, gold, phosphate, iron, clay, together, 28 percent; "all others" combined, 5 percent.

Although other witnesses representing specific commodities may scrutinize these percentages in more detail, it is helpful, in narrowing and defining the problem, to place these figures in proper perspective.

Coal, the report says, is responsible for 41 percent of the land disturbed by surface mining, 1.3 million acres of the total of 3.2 million acres. Fifteen States have statutes regulating surface mining.

An additional State, Colorado, has a Government-industry contractual program for mined land reclamation. Coal is surface-mined in 14 of these States. Based on 1964 production figures, these 14 States cover 93.6 percent of all the coal production by surface mining in the United States. The Interior report indicates satisfactory compliance with the enforcement of surface mining laws in these States. What then is the urgent need for additional regulatory controls? This is not to say that the total problem is eliminated, but it is to say that the States in which it exists have assumed the responsibility for adequate control.

Sand and gravel, according to Interior, account for 26 percent of the total acreage disturbed, and stone for 8 percent. It should be noted that the sand and gravel industry takes issue with these statistics, reporting them to be overstated by at least 100 percent. Sand and gravel, in common with crushed stone, are "local" products, used primarily in all types of construction.

Most of these materials are produced within 30 miles of the point of consumption. Literally thousands of these operations are located throughout the country. They are located in or adjoining nearly every community in the Nation. Most are tightly controlled by local zoning ordinances which prescribe in detail how the operation must be conducted and how reclamation must be performed. As the Interior report admits, much of this land is reclaimed already and sold at premium prices.

Because it is already controlled locally and because, in large measure, this land is already being reclaimed or put to some other use needed in the community, it is both unnecessary and unwise to superimpose Federal control on this extremely scattered segment of the mining industry. Indeed, except by creating a large new force of Federal employees, such Federal control is, as a practical matter, impossible.

We now find that coal, sand and gravel, and stone, representing