

suggested that these pits be "restored" to the natural condition of the land before their development and they do not cause the hazards to their surroundings that this legislation contemplates. What reason, then, to subject them to Federal legislation?

Noting that the hard mineral operations were included within the scope of the Interior report, the mining congress asked for information as to the identity of hard mineral surface mining operations which were deemed not to meet the standards of surface mining which the officials of the Department might have in mind. What should be done at these properties that is not now being done?

To date, the Department has not identified any current problem situations at any of these properties—another circumstance that indicates that the request for comprehensive Federal legislation applying to all surface mining is unnecessary.

The Interior report indicates that only 5 percent of the land claimed to be disturbed can be attributed to iron mining. What has been said about the hard minerals is essentially true of the iron ore mines. For the most part, these are large open pit mines which have their own unique grandeur of form and color so much so that they are prime attractions in their area. The governments of the States in which they are located are well informed on iron mining problems. In Minnesota, for example, the State is by far the largest single owner of mineral lands, and the State has received many millions of dollars in royalties. All of these States are developing a growing vigilance to the problems of mined land disturbance.

In this review of the various mineral commodities involved, we have attempted to place the problem in its proper perspective. Of the 3.2 million acres reported by Interior as disturbed land, the Interior report states that 1 million acres have already been reclaimed. Of the balance of the so-called disturbed lands, a substantial portion of such lands is being actively mined today. In many cases little, if any, reclamation can be accomplished while mining operations are underway.

Objectively, we should look at the extent to which mining is responsible for land disturbance and realize that only 0.14 percent of the total land of the United States is even claimed to have ever been disturbed by surface mining. We hope that the emotionalism sometimes attached to mining will not let us overlook the disturbance of land essential to our society. Vast proportions of the total land of this Nation are in a real sense disturbed by highway construction, farming, new housing projects, industrial developments, and many other programs essential to our Nation.

With this review of the problem, it can readily be seen that two things are happening—and both are persuasive arguments against the legislation now before you.

First, reclamation has become an important and expanding part of mining industry operations.

Second, reclamation does not present a uniform problem across the Nation. It varies by State and local area, as indeed it varies by segments of the mining industry. Where the problem is more pronounced, the States have acted and are continuing to act energetically to meet and correct that problem. In addition to those States with laws already on the books, others are considering regulatory programs where the need is justified.