

I understand there has been some talk of an adjusted appropriation of \$1.2 billion. When this proposal will be offered for legislation, I do not know, but my company is concerned with some 700,000 acres of land needing treatment in the Appalachian region right now. This 700,000 acres is approximately one-third of the total 2 million acres of land needing treatment throughout the United States. One-third of the \$1.2 billion amounts to \$400 million.

If, as I have stated, this acreage can be reseeded and fertilized for approximately \$35 per acre, which is a total of \$25 million, and should it cost another \$25 million to do some grading that would probably be necessary on a percentage of this total acreage, we arrive at a total expenditure of only \$50 million, which is a saving of \$350 million of the proposed appropriation.

I would like to add here, Mr. Chairman, that I believe the introduction of any possible solution to this problem that can save the taxpayers \$350 million merits considerable investigation. Neither the States nor the current operators should have to assume the obligations of the derelictions of the past.

It is my opinion that the best, if not the only way to bring the Appalachian strip coal mining industry to a standard acceptable to the general public is to eliminate the ugly scar tissue of the orphan acreage in the Appalachian region, and continue the present reclamation work on current acreage being disturbed by the surface mines throughout these States. This quite properly should be the only responsibility of the Federal Government.

I thank you gentlemen for giving me this time and opportunity to express my views on this most important issue before this committee.

Senator METCALF. Thank you, Mr. Coyle.

Senator Jordan?

Senator JORDAN. I have no questions. Thank you for your statement.

Senator METCALF. Mr. Coyle, it is your contention that the Federal Government should not require the mining companies or the strip miners to make any plans or contribute to the reclamation of land in the future? Is that your position?

Mr. COYLE. No, sir. I have observed that, as I stated, the operators are taking care of their current acreage in the most expedient manner possible. I believe that the whole reason for this hearing, the reason for the proposal of these acts, came from the pressure put on by the general public who have year after year observed this orphan acreage that nothing has been done about. They have pulled the blinds down, so to speak, on what was being done on the current acreage because they have observed this orphan acreage so often that they haven't taken the time to look at what is being currently done.

Senator METCALF. So you feel that the only function of the Federal Government should be to go in and reclaim and restore or recondition land that has already been abused and abandoned and hire companies, preferably yourself, to seed this area?

Mr. COYLE. That is correct to a point. I believe that any appropriation for this type of work should be put up for bid and I very affirmatively would bid on it, yes.

Senator METCALF. You have helped us here this morning in describing a method of reseeding and reclamation that certainly the committee