

FINANCING

Finally, if the administration of surface mining control programs in states with good legislation is any guide, an annual authorization of at least \$20 million appears to be required for the federal program.

STATEMENT OF JOHN L. HALL, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE
WILDERNESS SOCIETY

Mr. Chairman, my name is John L. Hall, Assistant Executive Director of The Wilderness Society, a 40,000-member national conservation organization with headquarters at 729 Fifteenth Street, N.W., in Washington, D.C. The Wilderness Society's objectives are to secure the preservation of wilderness, to carry on an educational program concerning the value of wilderness and how it may best be used and preserved in the public interest, to make and encourage scientific studies concerning wilderness, and to mobilize cooperation in resisting the invasion of wilderness. The Society strives to support all sound programs for the conservation of fish and wildlife, water, scenic, and outdoor recreation resources in order to assure balanced use of our nation's natural resources and the preservation of a quality environment for this generation and generations to come.

We are concerned about surface mining regulations because we know of the damaging effect of surface mining to our environment. We are aware of the vast areas of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio and Southern Indiana and Illinois where the coal has been mined by stripping and where no reclamation work or inadequate reclamation work has been done. This devastation has polluted the waters, made the land worthless, and has changed the environment of many sections of these states. We are also aware of the effect the surface mining for other minerals including common varieties of minerals can and does have in other parts of our nation. We are shocked at the total disregard some surface mine operators have for the other natural resources and for their fellow human beings. We appreciate the fine work being done by operators in some states who are concerned and who are doing an adequate job of surface restoration.

We endorse the proposed strong federal legislation that will help control and correct the ravaging effects of strip and surface mining. The federal legislation must be as strong as the state legislation now in effect in Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia so as not to undercut the strong state control in these states. Weak federal legislation would negate the work of the dedicated people in these states who with considerable courage and sacrifice have won such notable victories.

In those states where strong surface mining laws are in effect, it may not even be necessary for the federal government to intervene. The strong federal control is needed in those states that have weak surface mining regulations that do not protect other resources, the environment, and the people.

We are not opposed to mining, for the products of these mines and others are as necessary to us as to anyone. We are aware of the problems that face the coal mining industry in acid mine pollution and in air pollution. However, in some areas we question whether the stripping of coal or iron is worth the price. We ask, are the short term gains worth the long range detrimental effects on our total resources, and on the people who are left with a depressing, and uninviting environment.

We have wondered, can the surface mining industry afford the cost of strong reclamation requirements. The Wilderness Society has been told that, in the states of Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia where there was much concern expressed by the surface mining industry after the laws were proposed—that the industry is doing a thriving business under these strong requirements. Also, the cost of reclamation is from one tenth to one fifth of what was estimated by the industry.

In our suggestions for this legislation, we are guided by the Department of the Interior's report which recognized five major objectives that must be considered. They are: (1) Water quality control, (2) soil stabilization, (3) elimination of safety hazards, (4) conservation and preservation of natural resources and (5) restoration of natural beauty.