

make his determinations of approval or disapproval under section 7 of the bill. This also contributes to a rule of men rather than of laws. An exactly analogous situation has developed under the Water Quality Act of 1965, in which the Congress wisely gave the States an opportunity to develop water quality standards for interstate waters within their respective boundaries. Under that Act, the Secretary of the Interior is directed to make a determination as to whether or not the State standards are consistent with the objectives of the Act. The Secretary has never published in the Federal Register the criteria by which he makes such determinations. As a result, the policy of the Secretary has been expressed in various documents and letters issued both internally and externally to various parties from time to time over the past two years, and considerable confusion has arisen both among state agencies and among industrial companies as to the exact policy which is being followed in regard to these standards. It appears that some of the state standards already deemed to be consistent with the Act are no longer considered as acceptable. The confusing, varying attitude of the Secretary is illustrated by the sentence in his letter of February 15, 1968 to the Governor of Alabama, in which he states:

"In the course of approving the various standards submitted by the states, it has become obvious to me that some of those approved last summer were not of the same quality which we are now requiring."

The record of the Secretary of the Interior in administering an analogous set of provisions relating to water pollution control would appear to demonstrate it would be unwise to establish a similar system in regard to surface mining.

Because of the diverse conditions under which various minerals are mined in various localities; because of the fact that private industry and the State governments are handling the problems involved; and because of the deadening and disrupting effect of both actual and potential regulatory intervention by the federal government, we respectfully urge that the distinguished Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States Senate not report S.3132 or similar bills.

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STATEMENT OF FRANKLIN L. ORTH, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The National Rifle Association of America is highly pleased to have the opportunity to present this statement to the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs supporting S. 3132, S. 3126 and S. 217, bills for the protection and reclamation of land and waters affected by surface mining.

Mr. Chairman, the National Rifle Association, as the nation's largest sportsmen's organization, represents hundreds of thousands of hunter-sportsmen who are vitally concerned with the provisions of these bills for these measures will be of immense benefit to outdoor recreationists, conservationists and other land and water users alike.

We believe that the "Mined Lands Conservation Act of 1968", S. 3126, which provides for the conservation, acquisition and reclamation of surface and strip-mined areas, will inestimably further conservation and enhancement of our renewable natural resources through the eventual return to productivity of these ravaged lands.

The authorization of federal grants for investigations, experiments, demonstrations, studies and research projects to develop reclamation and conservation practices on strip and surface mined areas and to develop improved mining techniques will prove to be of immense practical value in returning these lands to their highest level of productivity.

Federal assistance provided in this bill for the reclamation and conservation of surface or strip-mined lands will enhance its recreational value in addition to aiding the reclamation of the country's natural beauty.

The National Rifle Association of America also feels that conservation of natural resources will be furthered immensely through the strong federal leadership voiced in S. 3132, the "Surface Mining Reclamation Act of 1968" in respect to the future regulation of surface mining operations and assistance to the States in reclaiming surface mined areas and in setting up their own programs for regulations and enforcement of surface mining laws. We commend the inclusion of the provision authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to promote, conduct, and accelerate research, studies, surveys, experiments and training in carrying out the provisions of the act as the findings from these activities will greatly improve the effectiveness of the States' regulations.