

the bill to the Senate and recommended its passage, he stated that its purpose is "to prevent . . . the needless degradation of the environment . . . and to assure that reasonable steps will be taken to reclaim mined areas after surface mining is completed." This terminology does not appear in the bill, however. The bill refers to regulations that would "prevent and eliminate such burdens and adverse effects" as impairing natural beauty and destroying wildlife habitat, and it requires assurance that adequate measures will be taken to reclaim surface mined areas. This discrepancy leaves much room for controversy, and, since all surface mining operations must necessarily cause some burdens and adverse effects on the environment, it could mean the difference between deterioration and continued growth of the phosphate mining industry which is so vital to the economic welfare and prosperity of the southeastern sector of Idaho.

We feel our apprehension is more than justified by the experience of our phosphate industry during the past two years in its efforts to work with the Interior Department toward a mutually-acceptable modification of the impractical and unworkable new regulations proposed for reclamation of mined areas on federal phosphate leases.

The mining industry of Idaho is not opposed to reasonable regulations designed to prevent needless degradation of the environment and to require reasonable and necessary reclamation of the mined areas after the mining is completed. We fully concur with the philosophy implied, if not expressed, in the proposed bill that the problems of protection and reclamation of lands mined by surface methods can be most efficiently and effectively solved under state programs adapted to local conditions and administered by individuals who are thoroughly familiar with all the technical, economic and social factors involved and are therefore most qualified to make judgments as to the need and value of the lands for other beneficial purposes in determining the degree of reclamation necessary.

We seriously doubt the necessity for imposition of federal control and supervision in this problem. We feel it would aggravate the administrative problems, require unnecessary duplication of effort and expense, and, in all likelihood, would entail restrictions that would impede the economic progress of our industry and our state.

In this part of the country it often seems that the prevailing philosophy in federal public land agencies is something less than sympathetic to our needs and aspirations. It seems to reflect, rather, the pressures of populated areas which have grown and prospered from the beneficial use (and often misuse) of their lands and now seek to handicap the development of the less populous western states by impeding and preventing the use of the lands within our borders.

We respectfully request that consideration of this legislation be deferred at least until the Public Land Law Review Commission's comprehensive review of the public land laws and their administration has been completed, and the impact of its recommendations on the problems of mined land reclamation is known.

We also request that this letter be incorporated in the hearing record.

Respectfully submitted,

A. J. TESKE, *Secretary.*

STATEMENT OF THE STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

The State Mining and Geology Board, at a regular meeting on April 8, 1968, after having reviewed the proposed federal legislation on surface mining regulations and having discussed these bills, as well as considerable supplementary information, unanimously went on record as not approving any legislation that would permit the federal government to dominate surface mining practices and controls in California.

The concern of the board is that federal legislation is very likely to be strongly influenced by attitude toward and experience with "strip-mining," as practiced in such coal-producing states as Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia.

In California, open pit operations such as those recovering borax at Kramer and those recovering rare earth minerals at Mountain Pass—both in the Mojave Desert—are so different that controls applicable to coal would be wholly inapplicable to these California deposits.

It is essential, therefore, that the State of California maintain local jurisdiction in these problems.