

Elected officials at the National, State, and local levels all testified in support of the proposal and 30 communications were received from municipal and county officials, all in favor of the plan. In addition, support was expressed by the New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development and a number of Federal agencies, including, of course, the National Park Service.

We are, Mr. Chairman, particularly anxious to secure approval of this legislation, for without affirmative action on the part of Congress, this unique natural wonder will remain vulnerable to man's encroachment. Far too often, we tend to think of the wonders of nature as being located in the western part of the United States in the area where "wide open spaces" are the rule rather than the exception.

It seems to me and to many of us that in the East, particularly in the sprawling New York-New Jersey metropolis where open spaces are at a definite premium, an area such as the Great Swamp becomes an even more valuable asset.

During the hearings in the House on this legislation members of the Public Lands Subcommittee expressed reservations over the qualifications of the Great Swamp for inclusion in the wilderness system. These reservations were based primarily on the fact that a public road separates the two units under consideration in this legislation.

You will see that road bisecting the two proposed sections of the wilderness area on the map I am referring to. I thought it might be of interest to bring a map of New Jersey to indicate where the Great Swamp is in comparison to Manhattan. It is about 30 miles due west of Manhattan and shows roughly what a valuable area it is in.

Since those House hearings we have been in touch with the municipal officials responsible for maintenance of this road. I am pleased to report that these officials have indicated their willingness to abandon and close this road if such action would be required to obtain favorable action on the legislation before the committee today.

I might point out at this time, Mr. Chairman, that our congressional delegation recently sent a letter to the Honorable Wayne Aspinall, chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, in which all 15 of us reaffirmed our desire to place this acreage in the wilderness system. The letter from the delegation noted the very high standards that an area must meet to obtain wilderness status and that we are aware of the limitations placed on an area as a result of achieving this status.

With the Chairman's permission, I should like to submit a copy of the letter for inclusion in the record.

Senator CHURCH. Without objection it will be so included.

(The letter referred to follows:)

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C., June 6, 1968.

HON. WAYNE N. ASPINALL,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We, the sponsors of H.R. 16771, should like to reaffirm our desire to include a large portion of the Great Swamp of Morris County, New Jersey, in the national wilderness system.

We should further like to express our support for keeping this valuable area in its pristine and unspoiled state. We oppose any man-made improvements or