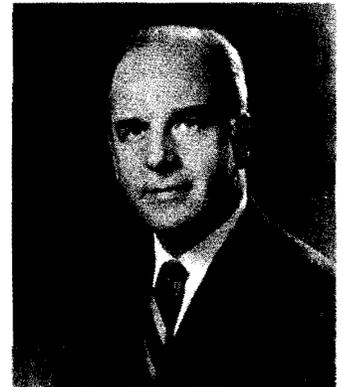


... legislative memo

from Senator Gaylord Nelson

Washington, D. C.

April 1970



EIGHTEEN STEPS TO A DECENT ENVIRONMENT

On January 19, in a speech before the Senate, I proposed an Environmental Agenda for the 1970's as a stepping off point for an unrelenting nationwide drive to clean up our environment and set new priorities for a livable America. The following memorandum briefly describes the eighteen bills, eight since January, that I have introduced in this Congress for the Agenda and reports their status:

1. S. J. Res. 169 is a proposed amendment to the U. S. Constitution which says: "Every person has the inalienable right to a decent environment. The United States and every State shall guarantee this right." Introduced January 19, the proposal has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.
2. S. 3401-3408 is a package of legislation which will ban eight of the most persistent, toxic pesticides. The compounds, which are contributing to the worldwide pesticide damage to fish and wildlife and the threat to man himself, are aldrin, chlordane, DDD/TDE, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, lindane and toxaphene. Last year, I introduced the bill to ban DDT, S. 1753. Introduced February 6, referred to Senate Agriculture Committee.
3. The National Lakes Preservation Act (S. 3444) would initiate a Federal-state-local program of shoreline management to protect U. S. lakes from the Great Lakes to Lake Tahoe from further destruction by pollution and overdevelopment. Introduced February 16, referred to Senate Public Works Committee.



4. The Marine Environment and Pollution Control Act (S. 3484) would take major and immediate steps to stop cities, industries and others from dumping wastes into the sea, a practice which now totals nearly thirty-seven million tons of wastes a year. This bill would halt all dumping of solid wastes into the ocean and the Great Lakes by 1975, except where there is no technically feasible alternative. Introduced February 19, referred to Senate Public Works Committee.

5. The Mined Lands Restoration and Protection Act (S. 3491) would establish tough new controls to halt the widespread devastation of the American landscape--more than 3.2 million acres now--by scrape-up-and-get-out stripmining. The bill would require environmental standards on all stripmining, set either by the states on national criteria, or, if the states didn't act, by the Federal government. Introduced February 23, referred to Senate Interior Committee.

6. The Detergent Pollution Control Act (S. 3507) is designed to end pollution of American lakes and rivers by detergents. The bill would ban phosphorus in detergents by June 30, 1972, and set national pollution control standards on all detergent ingredients. The phosphorus compounds, which comprise up to 50 percent of almost all laundry and mechanical dishwashing detergents, are accelerating the growth of recreation-destroying algae in lakes and rivers across the U.S. Introduced February 24, referred to Senate Public Works Committee.

7. A National Marine Resources Trust is proposed by this bill (S. 3631) to halt further oil drilling that is destroying the ocean environment by massive oil spills. Under the bill, all remaining oil and other mineral deposits would be held in the National Trust until it is environmentally safe to extract them. Introduced March 24, referred to Senate Interior Committee.



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8. The Packaging Pollution Control Act (S. 3665) would put an end to the "throwaway" packaging, such as "disposable" bottles, cans, and jars, that is littering the American countryside. Under the bill, industries would be charged for packaging that is not recycled into the economy or easily disposable. The funds raised would be returned to local governments to ease the costs of disposing of solid wastes. By June 30, 1974, national standards would be set to insure that all packaging is either returned, reused, or recycled, or else will degrade after use. Introduced April 1, referred to Senate Public Works Committee.

9. The Environmental Quality Education Act (S. 3151) provides a vigorous expansion of our activities from pre-school through college and beyond to improve American understanding of our fragile environment. Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee hearings are planned on the bill, and hearings on a similar measure are under way in the House. The chances are very good for passage this year.

10. The Low Emission Engine Vehicle Act (S. 3276) would ban the automobile internal combustion engine by January 1, 1978, and would provide \$50 million per year for the development of a non-polluting substitute and up to \$300 million to enable industry to tool up for production of the alternative clean engine. Introduced December 19, referred to Senate Commerce Committee.

11. S. 3295 is a bill providing for a far reaching reform of the nation's laws governing food additives, to require comprehensive testing of these compounds for a wide range of potential health hazards before government approval can be granted for the additives. Introduced December 22, referred to Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee.



12. S. 621 is a bill to establish an Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in northern Wisconsin to protect a unique natural resource for future generations. The bill has passed the Senate and is now under active consideration in the House Interior Committee after recent hearings. There is an excellent chance of passage.

The other pending bills are S. 365, to establish a National Commission on Public Health Hazards; S. 1799, to establish a National Commission on Pesticides; S. 2757, which sets forth new Federal programs to cut massive erosion along our streams, rivers and highways, and S. 2838, which would replace antiquated U.S. mining laws with a modern system of mineral leasing based on environmental quality principles.

Provisions of S. 1752, a bill to create a White House Council on Environmental Quality, became part of the National Environmental Policy Act which is now law. And an amendment I introduced last September to require the development of criteria for the establishment of pesticide limits in the nation's water quality standards has been approved by both the Senate and the House and will become law with the enactment of the Water Quality Improvement Act.

Together, these bills of the first and second sessions of the 91st Congress are basic foundations for a broad-gauged attack on our many, interrelated environmental problems, from stripmining to automobile pollution. I believe their enactment would be a sound beginning toward a sane environmental policy and a better future for all Americans.



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