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Stone Plans Swim

Pollution Licked In Miami River

TALLAHASSEE (AP) — Planning to swim in a clean Miami River in 18 months, Secretary of State Richard Stone Thursday said a federal report shows that pollution of the fouled stream has nearly been licked.

Stone called newsmen to his Spanish-styled Capitol office to comment on a U.S. Geological Survey reporting on high concentrations of PCBS, industrial chemical compounds, polluting the downtown Miami stream.

He said a March 9, 1971, reading of 3,200 parts per billion of PCBS in Miami River sludge— highest reading in the nation among monitored streams—had been reduced to 90 parts per billion by June 5, 1972.

The reading at the Miami Water Plant in Hialeah "indicates a dramatic improvement in reduction of chemical pollution of the Miami River," Stone said.

"I'm glad the report got out because it shows we've got a danger in waterways all over Florida and that we can lick it," he said.

Stone, who has closely identified himself with cleaning up the river, said the report was made by federal authorities at his request.

He has previously promised to take a dip in the once foul stream to celebrate its recovery.

But when asked if he was ready to don his swimming trunks and dive in, Stone said: "Not yet. I've about picked a time."

Stone said he would postpone the swim until a Miami International Airport pollution control system is completed in about 18 months.

He noted that the federal government has upgraded the Miami River from the worst category of polluted waterways to a "class three standard" designation.

That means the river is "safe for body contact and to take fish and shellfish from it," Stone said.

The federal reports indicate that the waters of the river are basically free of PCBS and other chemical pollutants, but the sludge on the bottom remains contaminated, he said.

Stone said Rep. Claude Pepper, D-Fla., and Sen. Laton Chiles, D-Fla., have bills pending in Congress calling for dredging of the river to remove the sludge. He said dredge possibilities are being reviewed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

In another move to demonstrate the river's improvement, Stone said he has asked the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission to study the variety and safety of fish presently found in the stream.

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