FOR RELEASE AT 12 NOON (EST) February 8, 1971

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

Last August I sent to the Congress the first annual report on the state of the nation's environment. In my message of transmittal, I declared that the report "describes the principal problems we face now and can expect to face in the future, and it provides us with perceptive guidelines for meeting them.... They point the directions in which we must move as rapidly as circumstances permit."

The comprehensive and wide-ranging action program I propose today builds upon the 37-point program I submitted to the Congress a year ago. It builds upon the progress made in the past year, and draws upon the experience gained in the past year. It gives us the means to ensure that, as a nation, we maintain the initiative so vigorously begun in our shared campaign to save and enhance our surroundings. This program includes:

Measures to strengthen pollution control programs

-- Charges on sulfur oxides and a tax on lead in gasoline to supplement regulatory controls on air pollution

-- More effective control of water pollution through a $12 billion national program and strengthened standard-setting and enforcement authorities

-- Comprehensive improvement in pesticide control authority

-- A Federal procurement program to encourage recycling of paper

Measures to control emerging problems

-- Regulation of toxic substances

-- Regulation of noise pollution

-- Controls on ocean dumping

Measures to promote environmental quality in land use decisions

-- A national land use policy

-- A new and greatly expanded open space and recreation program, bringing parks to the people in urban areas

-- Preservation of historic buildings through tax policy and other incentives

-- Substantial expansion of the wilderness areas preservation system

-- Advance public agency approval of power plant sites and transmission line routes

-- Regulation of environmental effects of surface and underground mining

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other paper products as possible. The regulations will be reviewed continually to increase the percentage of recycled paper required in each.

I have directed that the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality suggest to the Governors that they review State purchasing policies and where possible revise them to require recycled paper. To assist them, I have directed the Administrator of GSA to set up a technical liaison to provide States with the formally revised specifications as well as other important information on this new Federal program, which represents a significant first step toward a much broader use of Federal procurement policies to encourage recycling.

II. CONTROLLING EMERGING PROBLEMS

Environmental control efforts too often have been limited to cleaning up problems that have accumulated in the past. We must concentrate more on preventing the creation of new environmental problems and on dealing with emerging problems. We must, for example, prevent the harmful dumping of wastes into the ocean and the buildup of toxic materials throughout our environment. We must roll back increasingly annoying and hazardous levels of noise in our environment, particularly in the urban environment. Our goal in dealing with emerging environmental problems must be to ward them off before they become acute, not merely to undo the damage after it is done.

Toxic Substances

As we have become increasingly dependent on many chemicals and metals, we have become acutely aware of the potential toxicity of the materials entering our environment. Each year hundreds of new chemicals are commercially marketed and some of these chemicals may pose serious potential threats. Many existing chemicals and metals, [redacted] and mercury, also represent a hazard.

It is essential that we take steps to prevent chemical substances from becoming environmental hazards. Unless we develop better methods to assure adequate testing of chemicals, we will be inviting the environmental crises of the future.

-- I propose that the Administrator of EPA be empowered to restrict the use or distribution of any substance which he finds is a hazard to human health or the environment.

-- I propose that the Administrator be authorized to stop the sale or use of any substance that violates the provisions of the legislation and to seek immediate injunctive relief when use or distribution of a substance presents an imminent hazard to health or the environment.

-- I propose that the Administrator be authorized to prescribe minimum standard tests to be performed on substances.

This legislation, coupled with the proposal on pesticides and other existing laws, will provide greater protection to humans and wildlife from introduction of toxic substances into the environment. What I propose is not to ban beneficial uses of chemicals, but rather to control the use of those that may be harmful.

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This nation has met great challenges before. I believe we shall meet this challenge. I call upon all Americans to dedicate themselves during the decade of the seventies to the goal of restoring the environment and reclaiming the earth for ourselves and our posterity. And I invite all peoples everywhere to join us in this great endeavor. Together, we hold this good earth in trust. We must -- and together we can -- prove ourselves worthy of that trust.

RICHARD NIXON

THE WHITE HOUSE,

February 8, 1971.

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