

1
2 TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE OF

3
4 THE HONORABLE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS
5 ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL
6 PROTECTION AGENCY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

7
8 HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1972

9 THE ROMAN ROOM OF
10 THE BILTMORE HOTEL
11 FIFTH AND OLIVE STREETS
12 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

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17 REPORTED BY

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19 Curtis Jerry Dorrough
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21 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
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PROCEEDINGS AT CONFERENCE

MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Based on what I have read, there is apparently not much suspense about what I am going to say this morning. But, I am here in Los Angeles because in the implementation of the Clean Air Act, Los Angeles is really in a unique position among all of the cities in the country. I also want to be careful to explain precisely what we are doing today so there will be no misunderstanding of our action because I think it is a complicated enough matter that misunderstandings would be likely unless I give some explanation. So, what I have to say will be of some length and I hope that you can bear with me.

First of all, let me tell you what it is that we are doing and why. In the first instance why; the Clean Air Act says -- it was passed in 1970 -- it says first of all that the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency is to announce by April of 1971, which I did, ambient air quality standards for the nation. Those standards were primary standards to protect the public health and secondary standards to protect against all known or anticipated effects of air pollution.

What we are talking about here today is for the City of Los Angeles, an oxidant standard. The photochemical oxidant standard, as was announced in April of 1971, was in the first instance a primary standard to protect the

1 public health. Oxidants are formed by the combination of
2 hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides interacting in sunlight
3 and form what is commonly known as smog -- the problem
4 everybody knows exists here in Los Angeles.

5 Under the terms of the Act, the ambient air
6 quality standards had to be complied with by 1975, by
7 mid-1975. Or, if the Governor of a state requested a two
8 year extension of time from the primary or health related
9 standards, then we could give them until 1977. The Governor
10 of this state has requested a two year extension of time
11 for the achievement of the photochemical oxidant standard
12 here in Los Angeles and we have given him that two year
13 extension of time.

14 So, what we are talking about here today is
15 the achievement of this standard by 1977. The oxidant
16 standard that we set was at point -- .08 parts per million.
17 This was to protect the public health, as I have said. There
18 remained and remains considerable controversy over whether
19 this standard is too stringent. We believe the standard,
20 as announced, is necessary to protect the public health.
21 We are, and are going to continue to examine the health
22 related documents that backup that standard to insure that
23 we are on sound ground.

24 The State of California has set a photochemical
25 oxidant standard at .1, which is only slightly higher than

1 the standard we have set, slightly less stringent and there
2 have been several instances in the last few years in which,
3 particularly 1971 or 1970, in which the standards that we
4 set were exceeded by more than nine times over the standard.
5 It was at .62 once in Riverside, California. There have been
6 10 per cent of the days of the year in 1970 in which the
7 standard was exceeded by five times. So, even if the
8 standard were raised somewhat as the state has done, the
9 impact here in Los Angeles would be significant of photo-
10 chemical oxidants. Under the terms of the Act, in January
11 of 1972, the state submitted a plan. They had nine months
12 to submit it, to achieve the ambient air quality standards,
13 all of the standards that had been announced all over the
14 state.

15 We had announced the summer before, the
16 summer of 1971, that because we did not know enough about
17 the relationships between transportation controls that
18 were mandated under the Act, as one means of achieving the
19 standards, and their relationship to the achievement of
20 air quality goals, the states would not have to submit to
21 us by January of 1972 transportation controls as part of
22 their implementation plan. They would, however, have to
23 submit by February 15 of this year, of 1973, transportation
24 control strategy as a means of achieving the ambient air
25 quality standards if that was necessary in that particular

1 state or air quality control region.

2 In May of 1972 we disapproved the California
3 Plan to the extent that it did not achieve the photochemical
4 oxidant standards. This was necessary because the
5 strategy adopted by the State of California itself would
6 not have been sufficient to achieve the photochemical
7 oxidant standards. In September of last year the City of
8 Riverside challenged the failure of the Environmental
9 Protection Agency to propose a photochemical -- a transpor-
10 tation strategy to achieve the photochemical oxidant
11 standards in Los Angeles as they claim we were mandated
12 to do under the Act. The Court agreed with the City of
13 Riverside and ordered me, as the Administrator, to submit
14 a transportation strategy to achieve this standard by today,
15 by the 15th of January of this year. That is what I am
16 doing here today. I am complying with the Court Order and
17 with the Law as the Court has interpreted it. It is that
18 we are to submit a plan that will achieve the photochemical
19 oxidant standard by 1977.

20 Now, the plan itself; we have had some eighty
21 plans available, or eighty preambles to the plan and the
22 regulations themselves available, which we have handed out.
23 I trust most of you have one of these preambles and also
24 the regulations themselves. This preamble and the regulations
25 will be put in the Federal Register today in compliance

1 with the Court Order.

2 Now, using -- what the plan does, using 1970
3 as the base year, the year for which we have the most
4 complete set of statistics as to the amounts of hydro-
5 carbons that were going into the air in Los Angeles, we
6 find that there were some 1250 tons of hydrocarbons a day
7 going into the air in this Los Angeles Basin. Our studies
8 indicate that in order to achieve the photochemical oxidant
9 standards we must reduce the hydrocarbons from 1250 tons
10 a day to 160 tons a day. As you might imagine, that is a
11 significant reduction.

12 By 1977, because of the automobile emissions
13 control that will be installed on the newer automobiles
14 as mandated under that same Act, the Clean Air Act, and
15 also because of the stationary controls that the state has
16 imposed under their implementation plan and because of
17 some of the state plans to cause retrofit of certain
18 devices, we believe that -- our studies show that the
19 number, the amount of hydrocarbons that will be emitted
20 into the air by 1977 will be reduced to 691 tons a day.
21 So, what our plan has to do is reduce it further, the
22 amount of hydrocarbons, from 691 to 160.

23 Now, as to an outline of that plan, if you
24 will turn to page 13(a) of the preamble, which I have handed
25 out, there is a summary there of the strategy which we are --

1 -- that is 13(a). Do you have 13(a)?

2 This is what we will be submitting to the
3 Court as our plan for the meeting of the -- what we estimate
4 to be necessary in order to achieve the photochemical
5 oxidant standard. Now, if you will notice at the top of
6 that page, there are some 140 tons a day of hydrocarbons
7 caused by stationary sources and if you will add the
8 motorcycle emissions, the aircraft emissions and then all
9 of the mobile source emissions, you will note that there
10 are some 540 tons a day total on the hydrocarbons from
11 those sources. We intend to reduce, by the percentages
12 and by the number in the "ton per day" column, the amount
13 of hydrocarbons from the stationary sources through dry
14 cleaning, vapor recovery, degreasing substitutes and
15 primarily the looking into the possible strengthening of
16 Rule 66 here in Los Angeles, which controls solvents in
17 the use of paints. In the case of aircraft emissions we
18 have recently announced aircraft emission controls which
19 we believe will reduce by 11 tons per day the amount of
20 hydrocarbons emitted from aircraft. We then get into the
21 mobile source control strategy, which we are proposing.
22 There are a number of them there ranging from several
23 retrofit devices, which we believe are technologically
24 available for putting on existing cars and you will have
25 to read this document in order to understand which year

1 automobile these retrofit devices apply to. There are some
2 five of them listed there. Now, all of them have to be put
3 on all of the cars, but as a general rule the older the car
4 the more retrofitting is necessary in order to get the
5 reductions that are listed here. We have also suggested
6 that a -- that all fleet vehicles of 10 vehicles or more
7 should convert to a gaseous fuel system so that we can
8 achieve an 8 tons a day reduction in hydrocarbons as is
9 therein outlined. Now, clearly doing all of this short of
10 "G" under "mobile source control" will get us down to the
11 neighborhood of two parts per million hydrocarbons as a
12 standard.

13 In order to achieve the .08 standard it is
14 our estimate that we will have to reduce at a maximum,
15 vehicle miles traveled in the neighborhood of 80 to 82
16 per cent. The only way we can see that it is possible to
17 do this is through gas rationing. Now, we realize that
18 this is a tremendously controversial suggestion on our
19 part to the court. But, you know, I am also under Court
20 Order to come up with a plan that will demonstratively work
21 and, of this time, and as of this date, based upon all of
22 the studies that we have done and contracted for, this is
23 the only plan that we can think of that will demonstratively
24 achieve the photochemical oxidant standards by 1977. Now,
25 you say so why the strategy, why don't we adopt some other

1 strategy. We discussed in the preamble itself a number of
2 the other strategies that we have examined. I want to
3 emphasize that what I am doing today is proposing a strategy
4 to achieve the 1977 oxidant standards. We are by no means
5 saying that we have exhausted all of the other means of
6 achieving the 1977 standards. We believe that the other
7 strategies, which we have at this point not proposed, should
8 be fully examined by the public. We continue to examine
9 them ourselves so that to the extent possible, we can
10 come up with the best and most rational plan that will
11 achieve the standards because as the Court has interpreted
12 the Law, that is what we must do.

13 The cost of achieving the standards as pro-
14 posed is obviously substantial. There are individual costs,
15 costs for instance for the retrofit devices which we have
16 listed here, will range from \$80.00 for the newer cars,
17 '72 to '74 which have on it the emission devices which have
18 already effected a substantial reduction, from \$80.00 up
19 to \$400.00 for an uncontrolled car. Now, this is obviously
20 a substantial cost to an individual. It is also a regressive
21 cost in that those individuals who can least afford to pay
22 are usually the ones driving older cars and will be forced
23 in this instance to bear a very heavy financial burden.
24 Obviously unless there is some alternative mode of transpor-
25 tation for an individual in this category, he is going to

1 straights. It is for that reason that we believe the
2 investigation, the very serious investigation and
3 intelligent investigation into the application of the
4 mass transit system here in Los Angeles is very important
5 and very badly needed in order to address this problem
6 intelligently. The commercial impact of a standard of this
7 nature is, again, hard to assess at this time, but it is
8 likely to be very substantial on some commercial establish-
9 ments such as gas stations, for example, or automotive
10 parts manufacturers.

11 Again, we need to understand very carefully
12 not only the impact of the gas rationing of the magnitude
13 we are suggesting, but also the impact of intermittent
14 transportation controls if coupled with mass transit and
15 the impact -- the ability of people to move to the grocery
16 store or to the drug store or whatever service establish-
17 ment they want to move to that is unrelated to their work,
18 what impact would these kinds of controls have on this,
19 not only the commercial establishments but again the indi-
20 vidual. The manufacturing and wholesale trade and distri-
21 bution system also will be very hard hit by this proposal.

22 Now, what we are doing today is complying
23 with the Law as the Court has interpreted it. We have a
24 unique situation in Los Angeles. There is no place else
25 in the country where the Clean Air Act has anywhere near

1 the impact that it does here. There are other cities which
2 must impose transportation controls if they are going to
3 achieve the standards but none of them have even close
4 to the impact that we have here in Los Angeles and what
5 I am here to do today is to make a plea that now is not
6 the time for emotional responses. Now is not the time for
7 panic. Now is the time to face the problem of air pollution
8 in this city, in our country, head-on as very seriously and
9 as rationally as we can. Let's start by assuming that the
10 goal, as spelled out in the Act, is a good one and I think
11 everybody in the country will agree that the goal of the
12 protection of public health is a good one and what where
13 we have set the standard is where it is necessary to be
14 in order to achieve public health and then take a very
15 hard look at all of the ways, not only the proposal that
16 we have made here, or the proposal that we have not made
17 because we do not feel that we know enough about them,
18 to achieve the standard and come up with the best one we
19 can possibly come up with and then allow the people of
20 this community, of this state, to weigh the social cost of
21 achieving this benefit of healthy air against the -- weigh
22 the social cause against the benefit and having it in the
23 time-frame as set out in the statute itself. I believe
24 our approach should be sober, it ought to be careful and
25 rational. If our approach is that way and if the public

1 hearings that will follow the announcements are as complete
2 as, as well attended, as comprehensive as we hope, I believe
3 we can make substantial progress for the achievement of
4 healthy air in Los Angeles through the operation of this
5 process and that is what we intend to do.

6 Now, your questions.

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QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

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2 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, isn't this
3 action really intended to tell Congress to weaken the
4 standards of the Clean Air Act of 1970?

5 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: It most precisely is not
6 and that is what I tried to make clear. We are in a
7 unique situation here in Los Angeles and if you are talking
8 about asking Congress to weaken the standards, you must
9 carefully distinguish that request from a request of
10 stretching out the time in which the standard which is
11 there to protect the public health and environment can be
12 met.

13 What makes the situation doubly difficult
14 in Los Angeles is not only strengencies of the standards,
15 which as I say, we assume is necessary to protect the
16 public health and I think we must, really, but the time-
17 frame in which it is necessary to achieve

18 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, could you --

19 REPORTER: Would you welcome such a move
20 by Congress?

21 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: No.

22 I think that what we should do is go through
23 the process of seeing what available strategies there are
24 to achieve this goal that Congress has set and then look
25 very carefully so that we will have a good idea of what we

1 are doing at the best strategy we can devise and then take
2 a look at it and see if the people of this community want
3 to demand that Congress in some way amend the Act.

4 REPORTER: If the people of the community
5 were to request extensions of the deadline by as much as
6 10 years to develop rapid transit and to develop this
7 thing as new land use laws consider it, support it?

8 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I don't think it is at
9 this point -- it would be premature for me to say whether
10 I would support it because I believe we have to go through
11 this process that Congress has outlined and see, after
12 the hearings and after all of the investigations we can
13 make, the best plan we can come up with, at that point what
14 the economic and social dislocation is to the people of
15 the community and if it is severe I think the response
16 to Congress will come from the Representatives and Senators
17 of the State who will indicate that there may be a pleading
18 in the case of Los Angeles for the stretching out of the
19 time to achieve the standards.

20 REPORTER: With the amount of knowledge you
21 currently have, which is enormous, what is your feeling
22 about the viability of stretching those standards?

23 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, I am not sure I
24 understand what you mean by viability; the possibility --

25 REPORTER: The intelligence, would it be a

1 smart move?

2 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, if the only way that
3 we can achieve the standards by 1977 is to reduce traffic
4 by 82 per cent -- I don't frankly know that that is
5 possible to do by 1977 and still have a viable community
6 here in Los Angeles. What I am doing is what I think I
7 have been ordered to do by the Court, to come up with a
8 plan that achieves the standards.

9 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, whatever plan
10 you end up with, will that require, in part or in full,
11 state legislation to implement it?

12 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, it could --

13 REPORTER: And, if the state legislation
14 refuses to pass the legislation, where does that end
15 everybody up?

16 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, under the Act it is
17 fairly clearly stated that if the state doesn't act, the
18 Administrator does act. But, the Court stated where the
19 state refuses to act -- you know we said that there is no
20 reason to permit transportation controls to grow until we
21 know more about them and it could be that that same thing
22 applies in the case of an inspection system that we
23 recommend. If the state decided not to pass an inspection
24 system some time and there was none, it may be that that
25 authority rests in the Administrator to create that system.

1 How we would go about administering it or enforcing it
2 without the state or local cooperation, I think gives you
3 some pause. One of the things we have tried to do here
4 in the last few days and, I think with some success,
5 Mr. Fry, the Deputy Administrator, has been in California
6 talking to state and local officials and I think he has
7 got a very good reception. He feels that their attitude
8 is very good and that they are very cooperative about
9 the efforts to carry through with this investigation.

10 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, if your plan
11 were adopted per se, what sort of a time table would you
12 see for this cutting transportation mileage by 80 per cent
13 through gasoline rationing?

14 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Again, I want to emphasise
15 this: The Law does not provide for the achievement of
16 the standards until 1977. We are not talking about a June
17 80 per cent reduction in traffic. What we tentatively
18 would have in mind for any traffic reduction that we find
19 necessary would be that we start phasing these reductions
20 in around 1975 so as to get some idea as to how they worked,
21 what changes we needed to make in order to achieve the
22 standard by whatever date.

23 REPORTER: MR. Ruckelshaus, how would you
24 plan to carry out the gas rationing?

25 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, it is spelled out in

1 the regulations themselves. There are two ways in which
2 you can do it. One is to restrict the amount of gasoline
3 flowing to the retailer himself by controlling the manufactured
4 distribution of it and the second is through a system of
5 gas coupons that would be issued to individual drivers, or
6 registered drivers here in the Los Angeles Basin, and they
7 could only purchase gas with the use of these coupons. We
8 are not saying which is the best way to do it, but one or
9 the other seems to be the only viable way of proceeding.

10 REPORTER: Having laid down this plan, the
11 Court in this lawsuit, the Court Action, is that now off
12 your back, or are any future changes in the plan, are you
13 responsible, beholdng to the court for?

14 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, as a lawyer, the
15 last thing in the world I would want to do is speak for
16 a Court. I do think that the Court will retain jurisdiction
17 over the case. I am sure that the Court will want to see
18 the progress that is made under the plan as we have pro-
19 posed it and if the Court disagrees in any respect with
20 what we have done, or the plaintiff disagrees and wants
21 to go back in court and file some additional pleadings, the
22 Court will undoubtedly hear what they have to say and may
23 even request further response on our part.

24 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, if your job truly
25 is to protect the public health, might you not have to come

1 into areas like Los Angeles and close parts of it down
2 to vehicle traffic the way you went into Birmingham?

3 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, the situation in
4 Birmingham was an emergency episode in which the level
5 of particulates got so high that it violated our emergency
6 episode standards and therefore we closed them down for a
7 period of time until the air inversion that existed there
8 passed. Now, here it is more of a continuing problem than
9 one of emergency although the levels of air pollution here
10 are sufficiently high as to give us real pause from time to
11 time. But, it may be necessary and we have been adopting
12 an emergency episode plan for the Los Angeles Area that
13 where the levels of oxidants or whatever the pollutant
14 involved is, gets sufficiently high that very stringent
15 and quick action may have to be taken in order to get those
16 levels back down to where they are safe.

17 REPORTER: And that might be cutting off
18 parts of the city to cars?

19 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: It could although -- as I
20 say, there is a lot of trouble with that because the
21 pollution here tends to move at a fairly uniform rate from
22 one section of the city or one section of the basin to another
23 and closing off sections of the city might have a beneficial
24 effect on that part of the city, but it may not reduce the
25 amount of vehicle miles traveled, which are the things that

1 produce the hydrocarbons and puts them in the atmosphere.

2 REPORTER: Realistically, Mr. Ruckelshaus,
3 do you think the people of Southern California are going
4 to buy gasoline rationing if it comes to that?

5 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, I don't know, but I
6 do think that that is a political question in the sense
7 that when the Clean Air Act was passed, the people of
8 California, speaking through their Senators and Representatives,
9 overwhelmingly supported the aims and purposes of the
10 Clean Air Act.

11 Now that the implementation of the Act has
12 been brought to bear so severely on this community, the
13 kinds of questions they are going to have to weigh, and
14 I am sure you are going to get a divergence of opinion
15 from the people here is what do they want; are we serious
16 enough about having clean air in this community that we are
17 willing to take rather severe restrictions on the vehicle
18 miles traveled. That kind of question, it seems to me,
19 is one that ought to be answered through the political
20 process.

21 REPORTER: Would you extend gasoline rationing
22 to extended areas like San Diego or San Francisco that
23 also have a problem, especially San Diego, with oxidantals(sic)?
24 Could that be a possibility?

25 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I am not prepared at this

1 point to say because we do not have a submission of the
2 plan in California. I don't exactly know what they have
3 in mind. Their plan is due the middle of next month which
4 will also be due on this air basin here. But, as I stated
5 a moment ago, we do not have in any city in the country
6 the kind of impact on transportation by restrictions that
7 we do here in Los Angeles.

8 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, the Federal
9 Government is trying to cut down the automobile mileage in
10 Los Angeles. Is the Federal Government planning to help
11 us with the rapid transit system to provide an alternative?

12 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, as you know, the
13 Administration supported very strongly the opening up of
14 the highway trust fund last year in order to make available
15 some funds for cities that have an option to develop mass
16 transit system where that seemed to be a better mode of
17 transportation for them to adopt. As suggested once,
18 additional assistance might be given to California through
19 subsidization or whatever. I am not, at this point, prepared
20 to say.

21 REPORTER: Do you mean that the Federal
22 Government has not laid any plans to offer an alternative
23 at this moment, they are just saying cut down 80 per cent
24 of the automobile traffic without offering an alternative
25 to us?

1 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I think I have made it
2 pretty clear in the preamble to the regulations as proposed
3 in the Federal Register that mass transit has to be a very
4 integral and critical part of any transportation scheme
5 that would reduce the vehicle miles traveled in Los Angeles.
6 Just exactly how that ought to be done and who ought to
7 bear the burden for that, whether it ought to be the
8 tax-payers here or the tax-payers nationally -- that is
9 actually what you are talking about -- again, that is
10 something that remains to be seen.

11 REPORTER: You have laid out specifics for
12 eliminating automobile traffic for us in Los Angeles, but
13 you have not laid out specifics as an alternative for us
14 yet?

15 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I have been as specific
16 as I can possibly be given the knowledge that I have as
17 the Administrator of this Agency. The commitment has
18 to come from the local governments involved in terms of
19 developing a mass transit system.

20 REPORTER: If the national government says
21 if you don't have mass transit and you have to cut your
22 vehicle miles back 80 per cent, as a philosophical matter,
23 doesn't the Federal Government have the responsibility to
24 require and pay for it?

25 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I think the National Government

1 in the case of the Clean Air Act, the Congress has said
2 that it is a national policy that we shall have ambient
3 air at a level that protects the public health, and I have
4 been given a responsibility of achieving ambient air at
5 that level. One of the strategies that I have been given
6 to use to achieve that is a transportation strategy. Now,
7 the only transportation strategy that we can come up with
8 demonstrably will achieve the Congressional mandate of
9 clean air or healthy air here in Los Angeles, either the
10 one that I have outlined here this morning --

11 REPORTER: How about the strategy of wall
12 to wall buses?

13 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, again, you know,
14 obviously because of the social and economic disruption
15 that will occur by the reduction of over 80 per cent of
16 vehicle miles traveled in the May to October period, which
17 is what our regulation calls for, some alternative source
18 of -- form of transportation is going to be necessary.
19 Now, whether that is buses or some other form, I am not
20 in a position to say. I do not have funds to come in here
21 and implement the Clean Air Act in that fashion.

22 REPORTER: Does that mean after 60 days we
23 are going to finalize a plan?

24 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: No. That means that we
25 have no final deadline set as to when the plan will be

1 finalized. We have requested that comments be in in 60 days.
2 We will be announcing the holding of public hearings about
3 the plans and comments shortly.

4 REPORTER: Will all of the hearings be within
5 the 60 day period?

6 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I am not sure, but chances
7 are that they will. It depends on the -- obviously, there
8 is going to be some public interest. I think this, here,
9 indicates that. We have got to give the public a full
10 chance to be heard on this proposal or any alternative
11 proposal that might be available.

12 REPORTER: Sir, wouldn't it be easier for
13 the Government to force Detroit to come out with a cleaner
14 engine rather than perhaps paralyzing a community like
15 this with 82 per cent gasoline rationing?

16 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: What the Government has
17 done in the Clean Air Act of 1970 is mandate that Detroit
18 achieve by 1975 and 1976 extremely strengent reductions
19 in hydrocarbons. They have been able to achieve tremendous
20 reductions already in the hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide,
21 and hydrogen oxides out of the internal combustion engine.
22 Now, you cannot -- the Federal Government cannot mandate a
23 technological achievement inspite of the sometimes vast
24 powers of the Government. They cannot say by 1975 you shall
25 have an engine that does this if it is technologically

1 impossible, if it is infeasible. But, the point is the
2 Government has said, the Congress has said that by this
3 time these levels of air shall be achieved and what we are
4 dealing with in this nation are six million automobiles
5 that are, many of them, quite old and will not be affected
6 by any of the new standards. We will not have -- the
7 1972, 1973, and 1974 cars have a considerably reduced
8 emission, but we will not have the 1975 standards in effect
9 until 1975.

10 REPORTER: What is your real true feeling
11 about imposing 82 per cent gasoline rationing on Southern
12 California, what do you think the real chances are,
13 realistically?

14 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I am not in a position to
15 say that it can or cannot be done. I do not believe that
16 the final plan, as we come out with it, will achieve
17 reductions in that neighborhood, it seems to me, because
18 of the tight time-frame. I think it is unlikely that we
19 will be able to achieve reductions that great. However,
20 that does not rule out the ability of alternative strategies
21 to do the same thing, nor should it rule out the important
22 step we are attempting to take today in forcing people to
23 pay attention to the seriousness of the problem.

24 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus; is the Federal
25 Government trying to restrict the people --

1 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Say that again.

2 REPORTER: Certainly.

3 Is this action today intended as a scare
4 tactic to prod the public?

5 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: It is not at all. If I
6 wanted to scare them I would not have made a plea for no
7 emotion. I am not trying to scare anybody. I am simply
8 saying that under the law, as it presently exists, and
9 under the Court Order that I am under to respond to by
10 today, this is the only way that I feel, demonstratively,
11 we can comply with the Order and with the Law. Now, I
12 think that if the result of that compliance were to con-
13 vince people that everything that has happened under the
14 Clean Air Act was bad and that the Act itself was bad, that
15 would be very unfortunate because this is a unique
16 situation here from nationally. It is not the same in
17 the rest of the country, and the results of the implemen-
18 tation of the Clean Air Act is going to be appreciably
19 cleaner air in this country by 1975. That is the first
20 time, I think, in the history of this or any other country
21 in which we have had a national act of this kind addressed
22 to a pollution problem that we can point to results of that
23 magnitude.

24 REPORTER: But you talked about the stringent
25 standards and it was up to the people to decide and it ought

1 to be decided in the political process. Aren't you saying,
2 in effect, when you say that that it is up to Congress to
3 change the law because it can't be met?

4 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, I don't know that
5 there is anything inconsistent with what I just said here.
6 I think that you do have a unique situation and I think
7 that it is important that the people here do understand
8 the implications of this law on Los Angeles and that they
9 address it in as unemotional, as rational and as sober a
10 form as possible and decide for themselves, acting
11 through their Representatives what it is they want to do,
12 what they want Congress to do.

13 REPORTER: You have made it very clear that
14 you are trying to follow the law as it is set out and that
15 is why you are here today, but would this plan that you
16 announced today really work?

17 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, it depends on what
18 you mean by "would it work". Could we, in fact, reduce
19 the traffic by 80 per cent; I assume that we could do that.

20 REPORTER: Would the people buy it?

21 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I think it could be
22 enforced, yes. But, the last question, "Would the people
23 buy it?" is the crucial question. That is the reason
24 this plan is proposed. That is the reason we want public
25 hearings. We want an expression not only as -- don't

1 emphasize the 80 per cent reduction in vehicle miles
2 traveled and not the other aspects of this plan and some
3 of the alternative strategies that we have suggested. You
4 may be doing the thing that I am sure we will be accused
5 of doing, that is trying to scare people into saying the
6 Act wasn't any good. That is precisely what we are not
7 trying to do. We are simply saying that this is the result
8 of this law applied in this way in this community and it
9 may be that the law has to be changed, but let's go through
10 the process first and then decide what ought to be done.

11 REPORTER: If the people do not buy it, is the
12 next move up to Congress?

13 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, obviously it is, yes.
14 I don't have any flexibility under the Act. If I had
15 flexibility it may be that I would have come to a different
16 conclusion.

17 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus; isn't it true
18 that the reason that you are here, though, is partly
19 because the local and state agencies have not come up with
20 effective alternatives such as rapid transit without which
21 you have difficulty controlling without using a drastic
22 measure like gas rationing?

23 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: I suppose I could spend a
24 lot of time arguing about who is at fault here, whether it
25 is the state or local or Federal Government, and I am sure

1 that we can ascribe a lot of fault to a lot of people. But
2 I think at this point what we have is a very serious problem
3 and one that we are trying to address head-on and the
4 best approach would be to try and move forward and try
5 to find solutions to these problems rather than try to
6 assign blame for the past.

7 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, do you personally
8 think that the Act -- do you personally think that the
9 Act should be changed, sir, to be made more sensible and
10 if so in what way?

11 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Now, if you are asking me
12 whether I think, as the Administrator of this Agency, I
13 ought to have more flexibility, my answer is yes.

14 REPORTER: How would you --

15 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Wait. Let me finish.

16 It is in the nature of an administrative
17 executive agency to try and have more flexibility in order
18 to achieve what he deems to be in the public interest. I
19 think the Congress, in passing this Clean Air Act of 1970,
20 was acting out of some justifiable frustration in the lack
21 of progress that has been made in administrative agencies
22 in every level of government in the past. So, what they
23 did was restrict flexibility and I think what we ought to
24 do in devising a -- any amendment -- that might be submitted
25 to Congress -- I am not saying that we will have one at this

1 point -- is to try and give as much credence to Congressional
2 will as possible and restrict the flexibility that I
3 need in order to bring to bear strategies for Los Angeles
4 or any other communities that might be affected adversely,
5 not in this way, that are in the public interest, that
6 take into account the total public social impact of the
7 achievement of clean air. I think we ought to be very
8 specific about what that flexibility should be and
9 until we go through this process over the next 60 to 90
10 days, I think it would be premature for me to say
11 precisely what those amendments might be.

12 REPORTER: The only medical basis given for
13 oxidant standards there is a possible slight increase in
14 the aggravation of asthmatics. Wouldn't it be cheaper
15 to take the people that have asthma and send them to
16 Arizona free?

17 (Laughter)

18 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, that again --

19 REPORTER: Is there any other --

20 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, I think that is one
21 of the questions -- it is a legitimate question and one
22 that ought to be examined. I think, as you look at the
23 Clean Air Act, it says that I set a standard to protect
24 the public health. Now, when we identify groups of
25 people in the public with chronic disease or chronic ailments

1 of one kind or another who are adversely impacted by a
2 particular air pollutant, it seems to me that my responsi-
3 bility is to protect them. The air quality criterion docu-
4 ment which backs up the photochemical oxidant standard
5 spells out what all of the studies are that have been made
6 to identify the levels of oxidants in the air at which we
7 start having some adverse health impact. The Air
8 Resources Board, here in California, recently concluded a
9 study in which there was apparently unanimous agreement
10 that adverse health effects start to occur to the broad
11 population at .2 and this seems to be in general agreement.
12 You get a lot of medical controversy about where the
13 standard ought to be set, and I am sure that that will go
14 on. But, again under the Act, as I understand that Act,
15 I don't have the kind of flexibility that you suggest
16 might be another approach to this problem.

17 REPORTER: Have you determined how much this
18 plan will cost?

19 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Not entirely. We have --

20 REPORTER: Why not, sir?

21 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Pardon me?

22 REPORTER: Why not, isn't that important?

23 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, because we just do
24 not know enough about it to be able to -- we don't know
25 enough about the ways in which transportation can be

1 controlled in order to achieve given levels of air quality.
2 We don't know enough about the economic impact of this
3 plan and in the preamble itself I tried to spell out as I
4 did in summary in my opening statement some of the
5 economic impacts that we can anticipate.

6 Just how great they are going to be is
7 something I am just not in a position to say.

8 REPORTER: Do you have any general idea?

9 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, just as I say,
10 if you look at an individual retrofit, for example, that
11 will range from 80 to \$400.00 per car, that is a substantial
12 expenditure on the part of many, particularly those that
13 will be driving older cars. The impact on commercial
14 establishments, on the individuals ability to get to work,
15 again are very difficult to assess and any figure that
16 I gave you would be just pure speculation. The thing is
17 substantial.

18 REPORTER: If the public opted for a rapid
19 transit system through Congress, what do you feel the
20 shortest period of time would be that we could have one
21 in operation in Los Angeles?

22 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, if you have a mass
23 transit system here in Los Angeles and I think one of the
24 things we ought to do and one of the things we are going
25 to do is very carefully study how many vehicle miles travel

1 we might be able to reduce in Los Angeles through the
2 application of a mass transit system. Clearly the only
3 quick mass transit system would be an increase in the
4 number of buses in the area. You couldn't get any rail
5 system of any significance in place in a very short period
6 of time; so, while we could put in a number of buses, but
7 when you start getting up to the kinds of numbers that
8 really start having an impact on the vehicle miles traveled,
9 we start getting into great expenses. But, that is
10 something that can be done fairly quickly.

11 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, what happens in the
12 sixty-to-ninety day period which we are talking about now;
13 what agencies do you expect to participate in the public
14 hearings of what organizations or what happens after sixty days
15 or ninety days?

16 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: We expect as many agencies
17 as possible, both Federal and state and local will participate
18 in the public hearings. The Department of Transportation,
19 for example, at the Federal level ought to have a very large
20 role in the public hearings themselves in assessing the
21 transportation schemes that have been suggested and what
22 alternative forms might be feasible. By the same token, we
23 would expect that many of the local organizations, those
24 interested in clean air, there are a number here in this
25 basin that would participate, that the educational institutions,

1 Cal Tech and many other institutions in this area would
2 participate, that many of the foundations such as the Rand
3 Corporation and the others would participate. We hope to get
4 as much participation as possible by as many people as
5 possible and then at the end of the ninety day period we have
6 got to do something, I have got to make some decisions.

7 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, does the Federal
8 Government plan to serve as an example by restricting its
9 own employees to coming to work by automobile to only one day
10 a week?

11 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, I have no announcement
12 to make on that as yet.

13 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, is your plan
14 advanced to the point of setting up the mechanics of ration-
15 ing gas; who would get more coupons, would it depend on what
16 your occupation is or how far you lived from work or any of
17 that type of thing?

18 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: No.

19 That would be part of the kinds of questions
20 we would have to go into at the hearing itself. We have
21 not devised those schedules as yet.

22 REPORTER: Mr. Ruckelshaus, when will you have
23 your final plans after the public hearings are done and all,
24 when will you issue your final plan?

25 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, we will be issuing

1 the plans as soon as possible. I cannot give you any date.

2 REPORTER: Within the year?

3 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Within a year, yes.

4 A VOICE: A final question?

5 REPORTER: You mention in here that diesel
6 trucks will get by under these restrictions. To what extent
7 would the problem be solved if people went over to diesel
8 automobiles rather than gasoline engines?

9 MR. RUCKELSHAUS: Well, part of it would be
10 solved but, again, you are talking about a massive switch
11 from internal combustion engines to diesel engines.

12 A VOICE: Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, the press conference concluded.)

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