



ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS SUMMARY

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STRIP MINING

House rejects attempts to "substantially change" Interior Committee's proposed strip mine bill by defeating: (1) Weaker substitute offered by Hosmer(R-Calif.), (2) Stronger Hechler(D-W.Va.) substitute, (3) Young(D-Ga.) amendment banning stripping on mountain slopes greater than 20 degrees six months after bill enactment, (4) Hechler amendment to have permanent standards take effect 125 days after enactment (Comm. bill allows three years), (5) Nearly a dozen other weakening amendments proposed by Hosmer (Wash. Post, 7/19,23/74), (N.Y. Times, 7/23,19/74), (Wash. Star-News, 7/19/74). ADDITIONAL COVERAGE of bill's progress in N.Y. Times(7/21,18/74), Wash. Post(7/22,18/74), Louisville Courier-Journal(7/14,9/74), Oil Daily(7/16/74), Tennessean(7/11/74), Arizona Republic(7/11/74). TRAIN'S SUPPORT OF HOUSE INTERIOR COMMITTEE BILL gets AP coverage in Denver Post(7/11,10/74), Albany Democrat-Herald(7/10/74), Arizona Republic(7/9/74). Also Louisville Courier-Journal(7/9/74), L.A. Times(7/9/74), Las Vegas Review-Journal(7/10/74).IN EDITORIAL SUPPORTING INTERIOR COMMITTEE BILL, N.Y. Times(7/18/74) says, "No more than 10 percent of this country's recoverable coal reserves can be reached by surface mining. That should be a salient consideration in the debate...now before the House... There is neither sense nor sincerity in making the energy shortage a pretext for rejecting environmental curbs on surface mining when all the strippable coal in the country would in any case be exhausted in a few years of unrestricted operations. Such a course would leave great areas of the West in dismal ruins and the energy need as great as ever!" "THE CRUCIAL QUESTION BEFORE CONGRESS," says Wash. Post(7/17/74), "is whether or not strip mining will be allowed to shift from the Eastern coalfields to the Western ones. In this context, the issue, as...Train...said on his recent visit to scenes of strip mine devastation in the West, 'isn't just a confrontation between two special interests, the energy industry and the environmentalists. It is a problem that involves the whole fabric of our society.' ...The task before the House is to adopt decisive measures against the East-West shift...It is unfortunate that...[Interior Secretary] Morton is offering no leadership on this issue, but instead fell into line with the strip miners in attacking the mild House bill.... Train, however, offsets the timidity of Mr. Morton" "THIS BILL SEEMS TO STRIKE THE BEST POSSIBLE BALANCE between environmental concerns and the obvious need for more fuel," says Wash. Star-News(7/21/74)... "A recent, courageous endorsement of the legislation by...Train...has done much to offset mining-industry favoritism evident in the White House. This next week can bring a great victory for conservation if the House will hold fast." "IT WAS EXTRAORDINARY AND REFRESHING," says New Republic(7/20/74), "to watch...Train...split so sharply...from the administration's position on strip-mining...Interior Department sources preferred not to interpret Train's statement as a reflection of post-Watergate anarchy and insisted that his opinion on strip-mining be viewed as a result of his 'maturity and expertise on the issue.' What this meant became clearer...when Sawhill sharply revised his estimate of the coal production loss that might result from federal strip-mining controls. Although he maintained his opposition to the Udall-Mink[Interior Committee] bill, Sawhill reduced the range of possible coal loss from as high as 187 million tons down to 20 million to 60 million tons. Train seems to have had the right figures all along, and Sawhill didn't. Sawhill's last-minute recalculation didn't help the forces opposing the committee bill..."

IN OTHER STRIP MINE DEVELOPMENTS. Louisville Courier-Journal(7/7/74) reports

that wheat-growing and grazing pasturage projects in Western Kentucky by Peabody Coal and Badgett Coal, respectively, indicate that stripped land can be restored and even pay its own way.N.Y. Times(7/3/74) feature on "crucial debate" over whether Western coal lands can be reclaimed after being strip-mined--with the "key element" in the controversy being water.

OCEANS

Brooklyn College marine scientist, Dr. William Harris, says sewage sludge has oozed to within quarter-mile of Atlantic Beach, Long Island. Harris predicts that by summer of '76 beaches will be unusable, and by summer of '77 sludge will reach shore. (N.Y. Times, 7/14, 10/74), (Newsday, 7/10/74), (Bergen County Record, 7/10/74). Disputing Harris, EPA's Deputy Region I head, Eric Outwater, tells Long Island congressional meeting that there is no immediate danger--says that while sludge "pockets" can be found off L.I. beaches, they aren't harmful and do not indicate general landward movement (Long Island Press, 7/11/74). National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) positively identifies, for first time, the presence of sewage sludge one half-mile from Long Beach, L.I. in strip paralleling shore for nearly three miles. "May pose a health hazard to swimmers," says NOAA scientist. Findings "conflicted with [EPA] assurances... that its testing program--far less elaborate--had revealed no large sludge patches close to the shoreline." (Newsday, 7/11/74). EPA, NOAA say L.I. sludge "no threat" to swimmers and might even be of natural origins; but NOAA Assoc. Admin. David Wallace concedes that within two years it will be necessary to find new disposal areas because of increasing dumping volume.

IN OTHER OCEAN DEVELOPMENTS. Fla. Pollution Control Dept. specialist Gordon Cherr says chemical wastes that DuPont Co. wants to dump in the Gulf of Mexico (see 7/12/74 News Summary) will kill marine organisms (AP in Atlanta Constitution, 7/14/74, Fla. Times-Union, 7/13/74). Jackson, Miss. Clarion Ledger(7/12/74) reprints editorial from Daily Herald, Biloxi, Miss., calling for end to DuPont dumping since the Gulf "has provided at least 25 percent of the United States' total commercial fishery harvest... supports a marine sport fishery whose catch annually is estimated at over 300 million pounds... contains, or sustains, about 400 species of birds, wintering grounds for more than six million migratory waterfowl and ranges for numerous species considered rare or endangered." AT U.N.-SPONSORED LAW OF THE SEAS CONFERENCE in Caracas (see 7/12/74 News Summary) U.S. and Russia agree to recognize rights of coastal nations to control fishing, undersea oil drilling and other economic exploitation for 200 miles off their coasts and to extend territorial waters, where navigation controlled to 12 miles. (AP, Wash. Star-News, 7/12/74), (UPI, Chicago Tribune, 7/12/74). Syndicated columnist Victor Zorza says above-mentioned agreement leads some developing nations to accuse two "superpowers" of "ganging up on the rest of the world." According to Zorza, Panama TV commentator catches "mood of many of the developing nations" when he says Caracas conference shows "how the interests of the rich industrialized nations converge when it comes to keeping their hands free to exploit the world's resources without concern for the interests of the developing nations." Wash. Star-News(7/18/74) reports that sea conference officials hint another session needed in Vienna next year to polish final treaty text. N.Y. Times(7/21/74) says U.S. has accepted the inevitable in proposing new 12-mile territorial sea and 200-mile economic zone, but in doing so, has "properly insisted that the rights to extended jurisdiction at sea already claimed by many states must be accompanied by clearly recognized obligations to the international community... As the conference now enters the difficult negotiating state, it is essential that all parties approach the issues with maximum flexibility... The American negotiating position... represents a generally constructive step toward that goal." "EVIDENCE EMERGED" at 26th annual meeting of International Whaling Commission ("accused of being a rubber stamp for the world's whaling industry") "that the 15 member nations, succumbing to world opinion,

were giving priority to the survival of the whale over the interests of the whaling industry...For the first time[with "selective moratoriums"] the commission has the power... to impose a moratorium of indefinite duration on species before their numbers fall so low that it is no longer feasible to hunt them."(N.Y. Times, 7/1/74). Same paper(7/15/74) feels that despite Japanese-Russian vote against selective moratoriums, "The Russians were otherwise cooperative enough to encourage the hope that their country would this time abide by the vote of the majority. If that proves to be the case, Japan...may follow suit... No nation has the right to obliterate an animal species--least of all an animal as magnificent as the whale." "JAPANESE WHALERS ARGUE that the killed creatures provide necessary protein for the Japanese diet. Conservationists point out that Japan not only exports large amounts of protein to other countries in the form of such fish as tuna, but that only a tiny portion of Japan's protein comes from whales. But these arguments aside, if whales are as crucial to the Japanese public as the industry says, would it not make more sense to cease killing whales for 10 years and give the stocks a chance to replenish themselves? If whale meat is so vital, why is Japan intent on ravaging the source?"(Wash. Post, 7/20/74).THE BOYCOTT EFFORT by 17 American conservation groups [against Japanese goods]," says Wash. Star-News(7/9/74), "is an unwarranted extreme. Most species of whales are not being 'killed to extinction,' though more protection of a few depleted varieties certainly is needed. But, with international controls beginning to work, Americans should rely on their government to apply pressures for conformity with the new whaling bans and conservation quotas. Private groups can appeal strongly, of course, with persuasive arguments. But if they seriously attempt to damage the economy of Japan, the anger generated over there could very well make the ploy counterproductive. The whales might suffer even more, along with Japanese-American relations."

OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING

Fed. Judge William Hodges dismisses suit by Sierra Club, other environmental groups, to halt offshore drilling in eastern Gulf of Mexico. Sierra spokesman says no decision yet on whether to appeal (Wall St. Journal, 7/17/74). "IN NEW ATTEMPT TO BAN OR AT LEAST CONTROL offshore oil drilling in the Atlantic, Long Island officials have decided to ask the federal government to declare the waters within a radius of 80 to 90 miles a marine sanctuary"(Newsday, 7/7/74). ADMINISTRATION EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE specific new tracts for offshore drilling along Southern Calif. coast, but seven coastal cities "are preparing to resist what is seen as a unilateral decision in Washington." Six cities have asked Government delay until impact statement completed in fall; L.A., State Attorney General's Office, hint they may explore legal resistance (N.Y. Times, 7/14/74). Dep. Interior Undersecretary Jared Carter says future of Southern Cal. offshore drilling "depends largely upon the reaction of the people"; "If the 10 million people of Southern California say 'no' then it ain't gonna happen"(L.A. Times, 7/13/74). L.A. Times(7/9/74) points out that, besides the oil spill danger, "more serious misgivings concern whether or not an increase in offshore oil production is really in man's best interest. Is this not...an example of progress and poverty? If we think of real poverty in terms of quality of life, that point becomes clearer...Sure the oil from off our shores will help support our marvelous transportation network, but what is it worth if we have fewer places worth visiting? Who wants to spend a weekend in an oil town on the coast? Who wants to look out on an ocean dotted with oil rigs? Who would live in a home with a picture window looking out on this kind of sleazy view?...True progress should not erode, but enhance, the quality of our lives." "OIL INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES are constantly assuring the public," says Newsday(7/6/74), "that oil spills are few and far between, easily contained and seldom harmful to the environment. In a new study, [Oil Spills and the Marine Environment], the Ford Foundation wonders how the oil industry could have reached these conclusions. There is 'considerable ignorance' of the true

impact of oil spills, says the study, because the industry has spent very little time or money on research into their causes and effects...One way to develop better data would be for the oil industry to divert some of the funds it now spends on advertisements and press releases designed to play down the very real risks of offshore drilling." THE FORD FOUNDATION STUDY and other recent reports and studies have warned that federal policies of full speed ahead on oil drilling...may have very serious long-term damaging effects on the world's ability to sustain life and health. Now is the time to go slow, at least until more of the facts are in...the present policy of increasing production may prove to be disastrous."

BOTTLE BILLS

EPA Region I head John McGlennon calls for national mandatory beverage container deposit laws to reduce roadside litter (AP in Boston Globe, 7/7/74, Portland Press Herald, 7/8/74). SOURCE "CLOSE" to N.Y. City Council says proposed bottle bill for that city, despite "enthusiastic backing" by majority of councilmen, is "going no place" because "it's politically dangerous." Similar bills introduced across the country are dying because steel, aluminum industry and can, bottle makers are instigating "one of the most intensive lobbying campaigns in recent history." However, Vermont's bottle bill survives its first year--despite attempted judicial, legislative sabotage--with "little public complaint" and "sharply reduced" litter (N.Y. Times News Service in Louisville Courier Journal, 7/14/74, Corvallis, Ore. Gazette-Times, 7/8/74). SENATE PANEL ON NATIONAL SOLID WASTE PROBLEMS considers bill introduced by Sen Randolph (D-W.Va.) containing provision that would deny fed planning funds to any state, region with a litter-control law such as Oregon's bottle bill (Oregon Statesman, 7/6/74).



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