

“The time has come when the Nation as a whole must come to grips with smog. I think the way is now finally open to do just that.” HUBERT H. HUMPHREY



Cover photograph by the Los Angeles TIMES news bureau

Remarks of Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey at a meeting sponsored by the California Manufacturer's Association and the Los Angeles County Air Pollution Control District, Los Angeles, November 4, 1965. Delivered by V. G. MacKenzie, Assistant Surgeon General and Chief, Division of Air Pollution, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.



One day early in October of last year when the election campaign was in full swing, I was riding in a motorcade in downtown Los Angeles with my good friends Pierre Salinger and Governor Pat Brown. At one point, an Associated Press photographer took a picture of the three of us in our open car, a photograph that I believe got fairly wide national use. It showed my two companions smiling and waving at the crowds of people lining the street. I, however was in tears, my face distorted as I wiped my eyes with a handkerchief. That one incident did not make me an expert on air pollution but it left an impression that I will not soon forget.

It reminded me that air pollution is truly a formidable foe. Even here, where industry, Government, and the public have made a great and continuous effort to meet the problem, it is far from solved. There are still days when you can do nothing but smile through your tears.

I understand that the purpose of this conference which you are holding today is to consider a proposed new regulation for the control of an important source of air pollution which has not yet received attention anywhere else.

This conference, then, is yet another example of the high degree of worthwhile cooperation among industry, Government, and the public that has characterized your long war against smog. The war you are waging is already a modern legend. Only 20 years ago, when eyes first began to smart here, you had to fight alone. Few suspected that the entire Nation was entering the age of smog.

It was not until about 10 years ago that the Federal Government began a modest program of research and technical aid on the problem of air pollution. As our knowledge increased, it became more and more apparent that local and State efforts to control a complex and worsening air pollution problem were not enough. It also became apparent that the air pollution problem is a vastly more serious threat to human health and welfare than anyone once suspected. It harms us in subtly sinister as well as in blatantly obvious ways. It contributes to illness and death, it destroys property in the city and on the farm, and it imperils air and ground transportation. It is an important contributor to the ugliness that diminishes the quality of life for all Americans.



The challenge you face now threatens people in New York and Denver, in Phoenix and Cincinnati, and, I can tell you without hesitation, in my own place of business—Washington, D.C.

The time has come when the Nation as a whole must come to grips with smog. I think the way is now finally open to do just that.

President Johnson made it clear that we would no longer tolerate the continued growth of air pollution when he signed into law the Clean Air Act of 1963. The Clean Air Act not only increased Federal research activities, it also added important new dimensions to the Federal program. The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare is now authorized to award matching grants for the development and improvement of effective air pollution control programs throughout the country. All of the money that has thus far been made available for this purpose, more than \$4 million for the first year and \$5 million this year, has been committed. This money, together with the increases in their own expenditures which control agencies had to make in order to be eligible, has produced a 50

percent increase in the funds available for governmental control activities at the State and local levels.

What is equally important, the Clean Air Act enables the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to take steps to abate interstate air pollution problems. The experience of Los Angeles has shown that local governments can control most sources of air pollution, if they will. But the Federal Government cannot and will not stand idly by while the health and welfare of many people are jeopardized by sources of air pollution over which they have no direct legal recourse for abatement action, that is to say, sources in a State other than their own. The Federal responsibility to protect these people is clear and we have accepted it.

Just 2 weeks ago yesterday President Johnson signed a new and equally important piece of air pollution legislation which authorizes the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to set and enforce national standards to limit the amounts of hazardous pollutants that can be discharged by new motor vehicles. The whole Nation is indebted to you Californians for your long and productive



campaign to achieve meaningful control of air pollution from new motor vehicles. We have all learned from your experience. By the fall of 1967 citizens in every part of the land will begin to derive benefits like those you in California are deriving this fall from the control of air pollution from new cars. I wish the rest of the Nation were no further behind you than this in controlling the other major sources of air pollution.

I see no reason for further delay. The rest of the Nation should now move quickly to catch up. Those skeptics who complain that this, the richest Nation on earth, cannot afford to control air pollution ought to take a closer look at the costs of uncontrolled pollution. Last month, when President Johnson signed the new air pollution legislation, he reminded us that nationally the problem costs \$11 billion a year in economic damages alone. He also commented on the injury to health which must be calculated in terms of a currency more precious than dollars. The skeptics would do well also to take a close look at what you have achieved here. I see nothing to suggest that vigorous air pollution control has hurt the economy of Los Angeles.

I see much that suggests the contrary.

Our Nation is engaged in a quest to bring to all men a fair share of the riches produced by the most favored society in all of human history—the priceless gifts of health and education; a good job and a decent place to come home to at the end of the day's work; the right to equal protection under the law and an equal share in the processes of democratic government; the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of nature, not only in the open countryside, but in the heart of the city as well. These are among the goals that can be achieved by a great society. We intend to achieve them, and we do not plan to celebrate our bright victories under a dark shroud of smog. We must take all possible action *now* to reduce air pollution throughout the Nation. If we were to fail, serious deficiencies in the quality of life for ourselves and our children would be a tragic reminder of our neglect.

We must not fail. This administration is determined that the complex challenge of air pollution will yield to State and local efforts strengthened by a mounting Federal commitment to clear the air.



FOR RELEASE AT 12 NOON PACIFIC STANDARD TIME
Thursday, November 4, 1965

Remarks
of
Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey
at a Meeting Sponsored by
The California Manufacturer's Association
and
The Los Angeles County Air Pollution
Control District

Delivered by
Vernon G. MacKenzie
Assistant Surgeon General
Chief, Division of Air Pollution
Public Health Service
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Los Angeles, November 4, 1965

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