

June 21, 1968

NOTES BY VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON RECREATION AND NATURAL BEAUTY
WASHINGTON, D. C.
JUNE 21, 1968

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

I am happy to welcome you to the first meeting of the President's Council on Recreation and Natural Beauty at which I have the honor of presiding.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I welcome Mr. Rockefeller and the members of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty who are joining us today.

Many of you were present March 29 when the President designated me Chairman of the Council. For the benefit of those who were not present, I want to repeat that I feel our Council has a vital role to play in the efforts to renew, enhance, and maintain the quality of our environment.

Our busy, complex, and somewhat polluted environment, and its effects on the people of our country, are of real concern to me.

I have reviewed the activities of the Council to date and am happy to find that there have been some significant accomplishments.

I concluded that we should quickly complete our "Report on the American Environment." That report is now completed. We are calling it "From Sea to Shining Sea," and I have instructed the Council staff to have it printed and ready for distribution prior to September 1, 1968.

I see this report as a remarkable tribute to the achievements of President and Mrs. Johnson in making America a more attractive and desirable place to live.

I salute you and commend you for preparing a document of this depth and scope.

It should provide inspiration and guidance to all the Nation -- Federal, State and local, public and private -- in efforts to enhance the environment for years to come.

A draft of the report was transmitted to you on March 27. With remarkably few exceptions, your substantive comments on that draft have been accommodated in the final draft. So the report represents a consensus of the views of the Council. In fact, I am approving the seventh draft.

Some of the recommendations in the report go far beyond our present policies. That is good. It is the role of the Council to advise the President on future policy for the nation.

I believe that regardless of any other problems that may beset our nation, we must always and continuously plan for the future.

With this task completed, the Council can turn to new concerns. I am looking forward to working with you on future projects and pledge that all the efforts I can lend will be extended.

Let us now turn to Mr. Rockefeller and see what the Citizens' Committee has for us to consider.

* * *

Concluding Statement

We come now to the last . . . but certainly one of the most important items on the agenda -- the future role of this Council.

Our first task is to complete the recreation studies which are now before us -- the studies on:

- the utilization and disposition of federal lands for recreation,
- concession operations on federal lands available for outdoor recreation, and
- regional recreation planning.

It is imperative that we act quickly on these three studies to assure that future Americans will be able to experience and enjoy the natural beauties of our land.

Our charter, however, extends beyond recreation. It embraces responsibility for the preservation and enhancement of what Mr. Rockefeller so aptly calls "the total quality of our environment."

To discharge this responsibility we must expand our deliberations to deal with new and even more difficult problems.

It is ironic that the most serious threats to our environment today are by-products of our very national abundance. Our affluence has brought with it dirty air, dirty water, noise and congestion that diminish the quality of our national life and jeopardize the health and welfare of our citizens.

It is within our power to resolve the conflicts that our affluence brings, but only if we raise environmental issues to the highest priority in our planning and action for the future.

Each industry has a responsibility to consider the effect its operation may have upon the environment.

Each state and local government must act affirmatively to preserve and protect the surroundings in which our citizens live.

And at the federal level, our responsibility is just as great.

Certainly, we have made a start in the right direction in exercising this responsibility. All of us here today are aware of the important beginnings we have made with such programs as the Clean Water Restoration Act and the Air Quality Act, and with proposals such as the Electric Power Reliability Act and the aircraft noise abatement legislation.

But these are only beginnings. An important next step can be the Council's full implementation of its authority to review federal activities across the board, to assure that expenditures of the federal dollar are consistent with our goal of protecting and enhancing the quality of life in America today.

In such reviews, top priority should be given to certain problems which have been responsible for a great deal of disruption and conflict over the past few years -- highway design and routing...flood control, reclamation and power projects...location of power plants and transmission lines...and noise.

To help us meet these challenges, I am today appointing four working committees:

First, a working committee on the urban environment. This committee will be chaired by an representative appointed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It will propose programs by January 1, 1969, to clean up core city areas, control urban noise pollution, and increase the number and availability of urban recreation areas.

Second, a working committee on scenic roads and parkways. This committee's chairman will be the Executive Director of the Council. I am asking it to propose a procedure by October 1, 1968, for developing a scenic road and parkway program and will present a full program proposal by September 1, 1969.

Third, a working committee on utilities. This committee's chairman will be appointed by the Federal Power Commission. I have asked for a report by January 1, 1969, on environmental problems caused by utility plants and transmissions and distribution lines, and proposed solutions.

Fourth, a working committee on federal construction. This committee will be headed by the Executive Director of the Council. It will report to the Council by November 1, 1968, on steps Federal agencies are taking to incorporate environmental quality into construction projects, including those previously planned which did not adequately take account of such values.

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AT THIS POINT I AM HEREWITH SIGNING A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL LETTER TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, TRANSMITTING THE REPORT TO HIM. (THIS
SIGNING IS TO GET SOME STILL PICTURES FOR THE RECORD. ED CRAFTS WILL HAVE
THE LETTER AND AT THIS POINT WILL HAND IT TO YOU.)

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NOT IN RELEASE

Now, Laurance, let me hear your observations on the future of the Council.

(Then others.)

Vice President Hubert Humphrey today instructed the President's Council on Recreation and Natural Beauty to develop a nationwide scenic roads program for the next decade which would bring local recreation pleasure driving opportunities within the reach of every American.

He announced the scenic road assignment and a number of other actions designed to enhance the quality of the environment at a joint meeting of the President's Council, of which he is permanent chairman, and the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty, headed by Laurance S. Rockefeller.

The joint meeting had been called to receive the Rockefeller Committee's second annual environmental recommendations addressed to the President and to the Recreation and Natural Beauty Council. The Committee's recommendations emphasized the need for a scenic roads program.

In addition to the scenic roads assignment, the Vice President also announced actions looking toward control of utility line and utility plant intrusions on the environment; enhancing core city appearance, control of noise, and provision of more recreation areas in urban areas; and taking environmental quality into account in all Federal construction projects, including many planned years ago before the Nation was concerned with such values.

The Vice President named a task force composed of M. Cecil Mackey, Assistant Secretary, Department of Transportation; National Park Service Director, George B. Hartzog, Department of the Interior; Forest Service Chief Edward P. Cliff, Department of Agriculture; Deputy Director Phillip S. Hughes, Bureau of the Budget; and the Executive Director of the Council, Edward C. Crafts, as chairman to propose a scenic road and parkway procedure for developing a scenic road and parkway program by Oct. 1, 1968, and to have the program proposal completed by Sept. 1, 1969.

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"I want this Nation to develop, first, the scenic and recreational potential on many existing roads and by-ways, ~~the Vice President stated.~~ "Most of these will be rural, but some exist in urban areas. These roads can become recreation routes where families can genuinely enjoy pleasure driving, where the scenic corridor is protected, and where adequate recreational and sightseeing turn-outs, parking, and picnic areas are available."

"At the same time I want us to consider measures to make our major roads, ^{or parkway} and highways more pleasant ^{for drivers}. Opportunities abound to route and design these highways to take advantage of scenic splendors and to make them provide better access to recreation areas."

~~he said~~

"A third category of roads which merits full consideration involves National scenic parkways which are really elongated National Parks," the

Vice President stated. "This Nation's attractiveness will be enhanced by construction of a number of parkways which already have been proposed. Need for others should be explored."

The Vice President said that putting a price tag on the scenic roads program would be premature at this time, since details of its scope, administration, and possible Federal-State cost-sharing arrangements have not been developed. He said that the task force should consider use of the Highway Trust Fund as well as other means of financing the program.

A second task force appointed by the Vice President will assess recommendations of the Citizen's Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty on environmental intrusions of utility plants. These include thermal and other forms of pollution from atomic-power plants, intrusions of conventional plants, and effects of utility transmission and distribution lines.

The Citizen's Committee recommendations included a proposal that all new residential electric distribution lines be placed underground by 1975.

The Federal Power Commission was named chairman of the task force by the Vice President. The group will also consist of the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, and Defense, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The task force was instructed to submit recommendations to the Council staff by Jan. 1, 1969, on actions required to keep selection of utility plant sites and of utility line routes compatible with an environment of quality.

Vice President Humphrey appointed the Department of Housing and Urban Development as chairman, and the Departments of Health, Education and Welfare, the Interior, Commerce, and Transportation to study means to improve the urban environment.

The task force, to report to the Council staff by Jan. 1, 1969, was instructed to propose a specific program for cleaning up core city areas and making them more attractive. It was also instructed to propose a program to control the noise which renders many urban areas virtually untenable and to come forward with a proposal for increasing the number and availability of urban recreation areas.

The Vice President requested that the Departments of Defense, Transportation, and the Interior, the General Services Administration, and the Executive Director of the Council, as chairman, report to the Council by Nov. 1, 1968, on steps Federal agencies are taking to incorporate environmental qualities into construction projects which did not adequately consider such values at the time they were first planned. The task force was directed to propose administrative and legislative actions needed to assure that environmental quality is taken into account in such projects.

In other actions the Vice President announced that a Council report outlining recent progress in improving the quality of the Nation's environment and proposing needed actions for the future has been completed and will soon be published. He also said that Council recommendations on policies governing disposal of surplus Federal lands, on concessions operations on public lands, and an analysis of regional recreation planning should be forthcoming in the next few months.

~~Today~~
I want
to appear

~~no more~~

First, a task
force
Ask the Dept
2nd a task



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