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July 13, 1976

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL BILLS

Eagles Nest Wilderness--designates approximately 134,000 acres of land in Colorado to be wilderness area under the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Note: The Administration had proposed a wilderness area of 87,775 acres, and had the additional land not been also designated, the issue of the building of the reservoir would not have been so controversial. Hence, the bill would not have been so adamantly opposed by Denverites.

Alpine Lakes Management-- establishes 920,359 acres of land in Washington, including Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Wenatchee National Forests, to be wilderness area and appropriates \$57,000,000 for next three fiscal years for land acquisition.

Note: The Administration had proposed establishing a 292,000-acre wilderness area. This bill, in contrast to Eagles Nest, struck a balance between environmentalists and, in this case, the timber industry, since the timber people will receive a nice sum for the acquisition.

ME

February 5, 1976

SUBJECT: EPA RESIGNATIONS

Last night CBS carried a spot on the resignations of three lawyers in EPA's division of pesticides and toxic substances. The three charged that EPA has a list of 100 cancer-producing chemicals on which it is delaying action until after the election.

What is the White House reaction to this? Were these lawyers instructed to postpone action?

The charge that the Administration directed the EPA to delay action until after November is completely untrue. As I understand it, EPA does have a list of 100 suspect chemicals, but the list is still in the reviewing process. EPA will take action, if any is required, when they have completed all the necessary tests, as is their usual procedure.

ME

ENVIRONMENT vs ECONOMICS

Q. Strip mining, the use of heavy trucks to haul coal, and water pollution due to the mining have turned parts of Appalachia, once one of the most beautiful areas of the United States, into one of the most damaged. Your veto of the Strip Mining bill last spring seemed to indicate you put economic concerns over environmental concerns. How do you believe we can reconcile the two factors of ecological concerns and economic needs?

(A matter of concern to many groups scheduled to attend the conference.)

A. You will recall that the House sustained that veto.

I do not put one concern over the other. What we must try to accomplish is the establishment of the proper balance when considering all the relevant factors.

In my veto message, I stated my position in trying to seek this balance. "I favor action to protect the environment, to prevent abuses that have accompanied surface mining of coal, and to reclaim land disturbed by surface mining. I believe that we can achieve those goals without imposing unreasonable restraints on our ability to achieve energy independence, without adding unnecessary costs, without creating more unemployment and without precluding the use of vital domestic energy resources."

Recently proposed Department of the Interior regulations should, in my opinion, allow us to continue to approach our economic and energy goals while still maintaining the essential safeguards against environmental degradation.

Incidentally, I would have signed the Strip Mining Bill if it had reflected an awareness of the energy crisis. <sup>CWH/10-6-75</sup>  
It did not, and Congress was not willing to compromise to make it a realistic bill.