

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 12, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress the Fifth Annual Report of the Council on Environmental Quality.

When future historians look back on the pursuit of environmental quality in our era, they will recognize it as a positive turning point.

As I stated in an Earth Day speech in 1970, "the day is gone when concern for the land, the air and the water was sole province of the conservationist, the wilderness enthusiast, the bird watcher, and the environmental scientist."

Instead, today, millions of our citizens share a new vision of the future in which natural systems can be protected, pollution can be controlled, and our natural heritage will be preserved. The crusade to improve the quality of our human environment has begun -- a crusade which has already led to great accomplishment over the past five years.

Another valuable lesson was learned during the energy crisis last winter when, in trying circumstances, it became clear that we cannot achieve all our environmental and all our energy and economic goals at the same time. Had our commitment to the environment not been ingrained, we might have reacted to this situation by discarding our environmental goals. Had our commitment to the environment not been mature, we might not have recognized the need for balance to accommodate other social and economic goals as well. By rejecting the extremes -- by accepting the need for balance -- we held fast to the accomplishments of the past and looked with new perspective towards the imperatives of the future. This, in my judgment, is the course we must continue to follow.

The need to move toward greater self-sufficiency in energy is one of the major challenges of the decade ahead. We can and must meet our needs for energy, and in ways that minimize damage to the environment.

The conservation of energy provides an essential common ground between our need for energy and our desire to protect the environment. By eliminating waste in the use of energy, and by increasing the efficiency of the energy we use, we can move toward both goals simultaneously. Our experience this year has shown that there are major opportunities to conserve energy. And we are coming to understand that actions which temper our growing use of energy contribute to self-sufficiency as well as actions which increase our domestic supply.

We must also recognize that, even with a strong conservation program, we will still have to mine more coal, drill for more oil and gas, and build more powerplants and refineries. Each of these measures will have an impact on the environment. Yet this can be minimized, and the last

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five years have shown that we have the capacity and the willingness to do so. Science and technology, in which America excels, provides one means of limiting environmental damage; careful analysis and planning, with broad public participation, offers another.

Let us also be guided by our increased recognition of the interdependence of all nations of our globe and the fundamental relationship between population, resources, economic development, world stability, and the environment.

No longer is concern for the environment the dream of a few. Instead, it is reflected in countless actions by many citizens, by industry, and by government at all levels every day. The environmental movement has matured, and the nation and its environment have benefitted in the process. Looking to the future, we can expect further accomplishment in enhancing our environment and, along with it, further improvement in our quality of life.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,

December 12, 1974

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