

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 30, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

July 30, 1976

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Congress is now evaluating Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act under which the Army Corps of Engineers regulates dredge and fill activities. I have directed a 60-day delay in any expansion of Corps permit jurisdiction to accommodate this Congressional review.

In promulgating the regulations under this authority, we have sought -- to the maximum extent permissible under existing law -- to exempt agricultural and forestry activities. To the same end, we shall urge the Congress, in reconsidering this program, to provide an exemption for all lands currently used for farming, ranching and forestry as long as such use continues.

I believe such an exemption provides an appropriate balance between the need to protect the Nation's waters and wetlands and the need for production of food, fiber and forest products. Accordingly, I ask that you, as the Administration's spokesman for producers of these essential commodities, join with the Secretary of the Army and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in urging the Congress to enact such an exemption.

Sincerely,

GERALD R. FORD

The Honorable Earl L. Butz  
Secretary of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250