

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 1, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

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

Two hundred years ago, the United States of America was comprised of only 2.5 million people. Our country seemed an infinite expanse of natural resources.

Today, the United States of America encompasses over 3-1/2 million square miles, and numbers 215 million people. Although we remain one of the most fortunate nations on earth, our natural endowment is deteriorating.

The growth of our population and the expansion of American technology demonstrates that there are limitations to our natural riches. The industrial concept of man as master of an inexhaustible world for his convenience is giving way to an ecological concept of man as caretaker of limited resources that must be protected.

Since the adoption of the National Environmental Policy Act, Americans have made measurable progress in safeguarding, nurturing, and redeeming our natural heritage. Many other countries have joined in recognizing that misuse and irresponsible exploitation of the globe threaten the well-being of humanity. Yet, progress has been neither even nor universal.

A higher consciousness -- even spiritual awareness -- must evolve if humanity is to live in harmony with nature. We are grateful that the process of awakening has started.

In this first year of our third century, I am optimistic that growing American recognition of the respect and reverence that we must accord to earth, water and air will light the way to a new era. We must and will pass on to future Americans the magnificent legacy of nature as well as our cherished heritage of political freedom.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
OCTOBER 1, 1976

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