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**STATEMENT BY SENATOR EDWARD S. MUSKIE ON S. 886,
A BILL TO REDESIGNATE THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
AS THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, BEFORE
THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EXECUTIVE REORGANIZATION
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Mr. Chairman: I appreciate this opportunity to file a statement on S. 886, which would establish a Department of Natural Resources. This is important legislation that highlights the need to review the functions of many Federal agencies involved in resource development in order to determine whether their role might be more properly carried out in a single agency.

I support the concept that the development of this nation's natural resources should be coordinated to the greatest degree possible. I am also aware that there is often duplication, bureaucratic infighting and other jurisdictional problems involved in natural resource management. The time has come for us to eliminate these overlapping functions as much as possible and to achieve maximum coordination for positive management of the nation's resources.

At the same time I am concerned about the transfer of the air pollution control functions from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to the new Department, as provided by S. 886. My position on this suggestion is similar to my earlier opposition to and continued reservations about the transfer of water pollution control functions from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to the Department of Interior.

I agree with the concept that a Department of Natural Resources should be charged with the responsibility of developing and managing this nation's natural resources. Flood control, recreation, navigation, hydroelectric

power and irrigation are legitimate water resource management areas and might well fall within the jurisdiction of one Federal department.

However, I am convinced that environmental quality enjoys a unique posture within the administrative structure. On the surface it might be argued that air and water quality control is part of one overall resource management program. Although this is true, it must also be considered in relation to the other resource development programs within that agency in order to assure absence of conflicts of interest.

As an example I would like to cite the present situation in the Department of Interior. That Department has responsibility for irrigation, power marketing and mineral resource development. From time to time each of these responsibilities conflicts with the overall water quality control program. The agency charged with irrigation responsibility will be under pressure to frustrate efforts for control of pollution from irrigation run-off; the power people will be under pressure to frustrate efforts for strict temperature standards; and the mineral resource people will place mining and drilling ahead of water quality control.

Transfer of the air pollution control function into an agency charged with the responsibility of maintaining the market for high sulfur coal, oil and gas, and other minerals, which contribute to air pollution, would not enhance the chances for a positive national air pollution control effort.

Because air pollution is primarily a health problem and will become increasingly so as time passes, there is definitive justification for continuing the air pollution control program in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Air pollution damages crops, corrodes metals and

buildings, endangers visibility and adversely affects aesthetics. More importantly, air pollution adversely affects the health of human beings and animal life.

I submit that any proposal to transfer the air pollution control program at this time would be unwise and unjustified. At some time in the future the Congress may decide that all of the nation's environmental quality programs deserve special and singular attention. It may then be necessary to establish an independent agency to deal with these problems. However, until such time, I believe that wisdom dictates retention of the program in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare where a forward moving program is now getting under way. To move the program now would be to create disruption and delay in the national effort to preserve the quality of our environment and to secure clean air for all.