

Bates College

**SCARAB**

---

Congressional Records

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

---

9-21-1970

## **Press Release - Muskie Brings Tough Air Pollution Bill to Floor**

Edmund S. Muskie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scarab.bates.edu/mcr>

---

# MUSKIE

Maine

(202) 225-5344

FOR RELEASE

Immediately  
September 21, 1970

## MUSKIE BRINGS TOUGH AIR POLLUTION BILL TO FLOOR

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution, today opened Senate debate on the National Air Quality Standards Act of 1970, saying that the legislation "provides the Senate with a moment of truth."

Senator Muskie said the bill will be "a test of our commitment and a test of our faith: in our institutions, in our capacity to find answers to difficult economic and technological problems, and in the ability of American citizens to rise to the challenge of ending the threat of air pollution."

The measure, which was unanimously reported to the Senate by the Public Works Committee, would restructure and stiffen the nation's air pollution control program.

Senator Muskie said that a key principle of the legislation is that "tests of technological and economic feasibility shall not serve as barriers to standards designed to protect our health.... This may mean that people and industries will be asked to do what seems to be impossible at the present time. But if health is to be protected, these challenges must be met. I am convinced they can be met."

In remarks prepared for delivery on the Senate floor, Mr. Muskie said the bill is designed to ensure that "in every region of the country air quality will be better than that level of quality which protects health. Anybody in this nation ought to be able at some specific point in the future to breathe healthy air."

New source performance standards provided by the bill, Mr. Muskie said, "are intended to ensure that states like Maine will not have their clean air degraded."

The legislation would require that cars be 90 per cent cleaner by 1975 so that air quality standards can be maintained.

Although automobile manufacturers have complained that these standards are too stiff, Senator Muskie said that "predictions of technological impossibility or infeasibility are not sufficient as reasons to avoid tough standards and deadlines, and to thus compromise the public health."

"Detroit has told the nation," the Senator said, "that Americans cannot live without the automobile. This legislation would tell Detroit that if that is the case, then they must make an automobile with which Americans can live."

On all levels, Senator Muskie added, "the air pollution control program has been under-funded and under-manned. To implement the greater responsibilities of this bill, great financial commitments will have to be made and met at all levels.

"Air pollution control will be cheap only in relation to the costs of lack of control."

The bill authorizes spending \$125 million for research in fiscal 1971, \$150 million for fiscal 1972 and \$175 million for fiscal 1973 for research relating to fuels and vehicles. The bill authorizes research concerning the health effects of air pollution and authorizes an additional \$15 million for long-term contracts to carry out these investigations.

Senator Muskie characterized the measure as "a tough bill, because only a tough law will guarantee America clean air. It is a necessary bill, because the health of our people is at stake."