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Press Release - Muskie Calls Air Bill Most Important Item on Congressional Agenda

Edmund S. Muskie

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FOR RELEASE

UPON DELIVERY
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MUSKIE CALLS AIR BILL MOST IMPORTANT ITEM ON CONGRESSIONAL AGENDA

Less than a week before Congress returns from its election recess, Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D. Maine) today said that the National Air Quality Standards Act of 1970 is "the most important item on the unfinished agenda of the 91st Congress."

The Senator told the Northeast Area Conference of the Young Presidents Organization in Key Biscayne, Florida that "none of us can afford a casual and relaxed attitude toward environmental problems that grow only more serious with every passing day. We are all running out of time."

Senator Muskie, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution, told the Young Presidents that the government must control air pollution using the same tools with which industries maximize profits. "After all," he said, "Isn't it about time the government adopted in the public interest some of the methods which people like yourselves have used so successfully to advance the interests of your own companies--businesslike precision, fixed targets and tough performance standards."

Looking ahead, Senator Muskie said that industry executives must assume new roles in American society. "You can no longer act in quite the same way that company presidents acted 10 or 20 or 50 years ago--unaware of their obligation to conduct their operations in a manner that would avoid environmental harm."

Senator Muskie said that "the automobile is only one of our environmental dilemmas...The list seems endless. It is as long as the list of human activity. To achieve the proper balance--between the benefits of our technology and its risks--may be both the most difficult and unavoidable task man has ever faced."
