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**Press Release - Statement by Senator Edmund S. Muskie on Oil
Dumping by Navy Off Florida**

Edmund S. Muskie

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FOR RELEASE

December 3, 1970

STATEMENT BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

ON

OIL DUMPING BY NAVY OFF FLORIDA

Mr. President, I am astonished by the news that the Navy is dumping oil sludge into the Atlantic Ocean off the north coast of Florida.

According to dispatches, the sludge has formed an oil slick 40 miles long and 19 miles wide at a point fewer than 25 miles from the Atlantic beaches.

The slick endangers at least 50 miles of shoreline between south Georgia and St. Augustine. An official of the Florida Marine Patrol calls it the biggest oil spill he has ever seen.

The Navy does not deny it. Its spokesman says the Mayport Naval Station at the mouth of the St. Johns River has been using this procedure for the past two years.

He claims the Navy is judicious with its dumping. The barges go out to sea only twice every three months, and they do not dump until they are more than 50 miles from land.

Mr. President, I am appalled. The Navy's dumping blatantly violates the Nixon Administration's states policy on ocean dumping. It blatantly violates a Federal law on oil spills enacted just eight months ago today. It blatantly violates Interior Department regulations published only two months ago.

The President's position on the protection of our environment is well-known. Only last February, in his environmental message to the Congress, he made it clear:

"...the damage done to our environment has not been the work of evil men, nor has it been the inevitable by-product either of advancing technology or of growing population.

"It results not so much from choices made, as from choices neglected; not from malign intention, but from failure to take into full account the full consequences of our actions."

The Federal law on oil spills, P.L. 91-224 signed on April 3 by the President, is equally clear. It flatly prohibits the discharge of oil in harmful quantities into or upon the navigable waters, the adjoining shorelines, and the contiguous zone.

The Interior Department regulations issued September 11 just as clearly define what harmful quantities are. Any spill that violates applicable water quality standards or causes a film or sheen or discoloration of the water is a harmful quantity.

Only yesterday in New Orleans, three major oil companies were fined more than \$500,000 by a Federal court for safety violations at offshore wells, the kind of violations that have resulted in oil spills. But the Navy, dumping oil--not spilling oil--into the Atlantic Ocean goes scot-free.

Where does the Navy get its authority to dump oil sludge into the Atlantic, or any other ocean? The Navy's defense rests upon the most incredible claim of this continuing disaster. The Navy says it is acting under the Oil Pollution Act of 1924.

Mr. President, I read in their entirety two lines from the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1970, signed on April 3, 1970, by President Nixon:

"Sec. 108. The Oil Pollution Act, 1924 (43 Stat. 604), as amended (80 Stat. 1246-1252) is hereby repealed."
