

Summary

Task Force Report on Resources and Environment

Chairman: Russell E. Train

The report of the Task Force on Resources and Environment recommends that improved environmental management - especially in urban areas - be given high priority by the new Administration.

Although the report notes that many Federal departments and agencies are involved with environmental problems, it recommends postponing major reorganization in this field pending study by a Hoover-type commission or a National Commission on Environment. Such a commission should be concerned with more than just efficient administration. It also should devote attention to structural changes aimed at providing more effective monitoring of the major environmental impacts of Federal programs whose basic purpose is not environmental protection, such as highway construction.

For the immediate future, the report recommends:

- An effort to make existing programs work better by promoting greater Federal cooperation with business and with state and local governments.
- Increased appropriations (up to authorized levels).
- Appointment of a Special Assistant for Environmental Affairs, who would provide a focal point for policy and planning in this badly fragmented field.
- Broadening the responsibility of the existing inter-agency Council on Recreation and National Beauty and designating the new Special Assistant as its Executive Secretary. The Council

would be concerned with all environmental matters and also would function as a vehicle for consolidating other inter-agency groups dealing with the environment, such as the Water Resources Council and the Marine Science Council.

- Changing the name of the Citizens' Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty to the Citizens' Committee on the Environment, and extending its area of concern also. Private sector involvement would be one of the main considerations of this committee.

- Establishing a focal point of environmental responsibility in each Federal agency whose activities significantly affect the environment, comparable to the units now existing in the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Transportation.

- A Presidential statement of goals and priorities in this field, preferably as a message to Congress.

Finally, the report notes that many environmental bills were presented in the 90th Congress and that voters in state and local elections have shown great willingness to support bond issues for environmental programs. This clearly indicates that environmental problems are now of considerable concern to voters.