

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 22, 1970

FOR JOHN D. EHRLICHMAN

On January 9 you reported that "The President thinks it might be worthwhile for him to correspond with leading thinkers in various fields to solicit their comments and ideas on the issues of the day." In the domestic area he is thinking of the field of "environmental reclamation and ecological preservation."

You asked what I thought of the idea, and who might 10 or 15 correspondents be.

I think it is a good idea. I would hold off thinking of publishing anything until we see what comes of it, but almost any contact of this kind is likely to be of use to the President and to the professors. In particular, the subject of the environment is at this point so vague and unformed, we really must move quickly to impose some structure on our efforts. This requires advice.

I have a specific thought concerning the April 22 EARTH DAY. Clearly this is an opportunity to get the President usefully and positively involved with a large student movement. My thought would be to solicit ideas from the experts in the field, cull those responses, and direct specific questions to each of the "Environmental Teach-Ins." The object would be to come up with hard questions centering on valid issues of trade-offs and the like. These questions are not easy to answer. In the process we could engage in some future goal setting as well. (The results of this effort might be publishable.) In any event it would give some structure and recognition to the EARTH DAY effort, and get us some potentially valuable advice as well.

As a start, I propose the President, if he likes the idea, send something like the enclosed letter to something like the attached list. I don't know most of the people on it, but they are well vouched for. As the responses come back, we can frame our strategy for the April 22 Teach-Ins.

Chris DeMuth is in touch with the EARTH DAY group, which is headquartered here in Washington. Relations apparently are fine. We would want to get some agreement from them before following up on the professors' responses. I think it will also be necessary and wise to give Gaylord Nelson and Paul McCloskey their due as sponsors of the occasion. I was lobbying Nelson yesterday on behalf of Rumsfeld (unsuccessfully) and suggested I would be back at him about EARTH DAY sometime in February. He was entirely cordial.



Daniel P. Moynihan

Attachments

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear

As you will of course be aware, there is a rising interest in the nation in environmental problems. As I remarked in the State of the Union Message, "The great question of the seventies is, shall we surrender to our surroundings, or shall we make our peace with nature and begin to make reparations for the damage we have done to our air, our land and our water?"

If this is to become, as I hope and trust it will, a common cause of all the people of America it is necessary to establish some order of priorities, and to develop a set of strategies with respect to the problems involved. I am writing to ask if you would be good enough to share with me your thoughts on this matter.

Which do you consider the most pressing issues of governmental reclamation and ecological preservation? Can you distinguish between those more important in the near term, and those that will be critical for the long run? Which problems would you describe as knowledge problems, that is, subjects on which the basic research or technological development has yet to be done? Which problems are basically political, in that we know what to do and how, but have not mustered an effective political majority in favor of change. In all these matters -- and in any others that might occur to you -- what ought to be the role of the Federal government?

I would most appreciate any thoughts you might have to offer in this regard. Don't hesitate to write at whatever length you desire, or to suggest useful documents already prepared. Please be assured that I will be giving your reply the closest attention.

Sincerely,

Dr. W. Frank Blair  
Department of Zoology  
University of Texas  
Austin, Texas 78712

Nyle Brady  
Director of Research  
Cornell University Agricultural College

John C. Calhoun, Jr.  
Vice President  
Texas A and M University  
College Station, Texas

Dr. John E. Cantlon  
Provost  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Roland Clement  
Vice President  
Audubon Society

Dr. LaMont C. Cble  
Langmuir Laboratory  
Cornell University

Eugene Cronin  
Director  
National Resources Institute and  
Chesapeake Biological Laboratory  
University of Maryland

Edward Deevey  
President  
Ecological Society of America  
Dalhousie University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dr. Rene Jules Dubos  
Rockefeller University

Merril Eisenbud  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Administration  
New York City

Michael Frome  
Conservation Editor, Field and Stream

Paul Fye  
Director  
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution  
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

Ira N. Gabrielson  
President  
Wildlife Management Institute

John Geyer  
Professor of Sanitary Engineering  
Johns Hopkins University

Harold Gilliam  
San Francisco Chronicle

A.J. Haagen-Schmidt  
Professor of Biochemistry  
California Institute of Technology

Dr. Arthur Hasler  
Laboratory of Limnology  
University of Wisconsin

G. Evelyn Hutchinson  
Professor of Biology  
Yale University

Hans H. Landsburg  
Resources for the Future, Inc.

Joshua Lederberg  
Stanford University

Ian McHaarg  
Author

Thomas P. Malone  
Traveler's Insurance Company  
Hartford, Connecticut

John Milton  
Secretary  
Conservation Foundation

Robert S. Morison  
Director  
Division of Bibliography, Cornell University

Emil Mrak  
Chairman  
HEW Committee on Pesticides

Norton Nelson  
New York University Medical Center

Ruth Patrick  
Philadelphia Academy of Sciences

Harvey S. Perloff  
Dean  
School of Architecture  
University of California at Los Angeles

David Pimental  
Professor of Entomology  
Cornell University

Roger Revelle  
Center for Population Studies  
Harvard University

Dr. Frederick E. Smith  
Professor of Resources Ecology  
Graduate School of Design  
Harvard University

Stephen S. Spurr  
Dean

John Tukey  
Princeton University

Dr. Gilbert F. White  
Rosenwald Hall  
University of Chicago

James Whittenberger  
Harvard University School of Public Health

Nathaniel Wollman  
Professor of Economics  
University of New Mexico

Abel Wolman  
Professor of Sanitary Engineering, Emeritus  
Johns Hopkins University