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Acid Rain Symposium, Yellow Bay Research Station (1)

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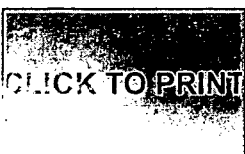
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KEYNOTE ADDRESS
SENATOR MAX BAUCUS
ACID RAIN SYMPOSIUM
YELLOW BAY RESEARCH STATION
FLATHEAD LAKE, MONTANA

AUGUST 28, 1980

THANK YOU, THURMAN, FOR THAT VERY GENEROUS INTRODUCTION AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SYMPOSIUM.

LET ME BEGIN BY SAYING THAT JUST TWO WEEKS AGO TODAY I FOUND MYSELF IN QUITE A DIFFERENT PLACE -- THE FLOOR OF MADISON SQUARE GARDEN AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION. I MUST SAY THAT DEMOCRATS WILL NEVER BE OUTDONE. WITH THE PRESIDENT NOMINATED, THE CONVENTION SEEMED TO BE LACKING STEAM UNTIL ALL EYES TURNED TO THAT LARGE BUNDLE OF BALLOONS ON THE CEILING THAT REFUSED TO DROP ON CUE.

one of Newton's

THAT LITTLE STUNT WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED BY SCIENTISTS AND SCIENCE LOVERS AROUND THE WORLD. THAT NIGHT THE DEMOCRATS REWROTE THE LAW OF PHYSICS BY PROVING THAT WHAT GOES UP DOESN'T NECESSARILY COME DOWN.

BUT DESPITE THOSE STUBBORN BALLOONS AT THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION, WE ALL KNOW THAT WHAT GOES UP DOES COME DOWN. AND; THAT IS WHAT OUR DISCUSSION TODAY IS REALLY ALL ABOUT. UNFORTUNATELY, IN THE CASE OF ACID RAIN THE "WHAT COMES DOWN" MAY BE FAR WORSE THAN THE "WHAT WENT UP."

ACID RAIN -- IT'S AS SIMPLE AS FIRST YEAR CHEMISTRY. SULPHUR AND NITROGEN OXIDES EMITTED BY UTILITIES, CARS, AND COAL FIRED INDUSTRIAL PLANTS ARE SPEWED INTO THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE. THERE THEY COMBINE WITH ATMOSPHERIC WATER AND FALL TO THE EARTH AS SULPHURIC AND NITRIC ACIDS.

THE EFFECTS OF ACID RAIN ARE FELT THROUGHOUT THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES AND EASTERN CANADA. NOW MANY SAY THAT IT ALSO THREATENS THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN STATES AND THE WEST COAST.

IF THIS NATION'S SHIFT AWAY FROM OIL AND GAS TO COAL IS REALIZED, THAT THREAT WILL MOST CERTAINLY SPREAD TO OTHER AREAS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE NEED FOR US TO EXPAND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD AND TO COORDINATE OUR EFFORTS IN RESPONDING TO IT WILL ALSO GROW. TODAY'S SYMPOSIUM IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

7 I AM NOT A SCIENTIST NOR AN EXPERT ON ACID RAIN. BUT, I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK FOR A FEW MOMENTS ABOUT SOME OF THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS WE WILL FACE ~~IN THIS PROCESS~~

ACID RAIN DOES NOT HAVE MUCH SEX APPEAL. UNLIKE RAW SEWAGE POURING INTO A STREAM OR CLOUDS OF SMOG SHROUDING OUR CITIES, ACID RAIN DOES NOT PHOTOGRAPH ~~WELL~~. *It's difficult to see on evening news.*

THE RAIN SHOWERS THAT FALL ARE AS REFRESHING AS ALWAYS. ACID RAIN DOESN'T TASTE BAD. IT DOESN'T HAVE A FOUL SMELL. IT DOESN'T MAKE A LAKE LOOK DIRTY. IN FACT, JUST THE OPPOSITE ~~IS TRUE~~.

there's a problem.

SO, IT IS HARD TO CONVINCING CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS THAT ~~THE PROBLEM EXISTS~~. YOU CAN TAKE A SUBCOMMITTEE OUT TO A LAKE AND LOOK AT THE EFFECTS OF UNTREATED SEWAGE, FOR EXAMPLE, BUT NOT A LAKE AFFECTED BY ACID RAIN. THE WATER IN AN ACID LAKE WOULD, IN FACT, BE STRIKINGLY CLEAR. YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE BOTTOM THROUGH THE CRYSTALLINE BLUE WATERS.

BUT, IN FACT, THAT LAKE IS DIEING. PLANT GROWTH IS RESTRICTED, FISH REPRODUCTION IS HAMPERED, BACTERIAL DECOMPOSITION -- THE BUILDING BLOCK ON WHICH THE AQUATIC FOOD CHAIN IS BUILT -- IS REDUCED.

ALTHOUGH ACID RAIN IS NOT ALWAYS OBVIOUS, THE THREAT IS THERE.
* THE MOST REMARKABLE DEMONSTRATION OF THIS PHENOMENON OCCURRED APRIL 10, 1974 IN SCOTLAND. AS UMBRELLAS WERE UNFURLED THAT DAY, FEW SCOTS WALKING THROUGH THE THUNDERSTORM WOULD HAVE GUESSED THAT THEY WERE BEING SHOWERED BY RAIN ROUGHLY AS ACIDIC AS VINEGAR.

CLOSER TO HOME, EXPERTS LIKE YOURSELVES HAVE DOCUMENTED THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY ACID RAIN IN THE LAKES AND STREAMS OF THE SHENANDOAH NATIONAL FOREST IN VIRGINIA, THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS OF NEW YORK, AND THE BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA OF NORTHERN MINNESOTA. BUT THE DAMAGE WON'T STOP THERE. ALREADY, ACCORDING TO THE CONGRESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY CONFERENCE, DAMAGE TO BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS HAS RISEN OVER THE \$1 BILLION MARK.

CROP AND FOREST PRODUCTIVITY MAY BE REDUCED.

WORST OF ALL, INCREASED ACIDITY IN OUR WATER SUPPLIES MAY RESULT IN THE ACCUMULATION OF TOXIC HEAVY METALS IN OUR OWN FOOD CHAINS, CREATING A GRAVE HEALTH RISK.

MONTANA HAS YET TO FEEL THE BRUNT OF THESE PROBLEMS. OUR EXCELLENT BLUE RIBBON TROUT STREAMS AND OUR CLEAN AIR ARE DECEPTIVE. BUT DANGEROUS SIGNS LOOM ON THE HORIZON.

CANADA'S PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY IS ANXIOUS TO EXPAND. THAT MEANS MORE POLLUTION. INCREASED ELECTRICAL GENERATION NORTH OF THE BORDER SUCH AS THE POPLAR RIVER GENERATING STATION POSES EVEN MORE DANGER.

IN ADDITION, EPA SAYS MONTANA MAY BE PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO ACID RAIN. IN A 1979 ANALYSIS OF SOIL COMPOSITION, CLIMATIC PATTERNS, AND VEGETATION, THE AGENCY FOUND PARTICULAR VULNERABILITY IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.

WHAT COULD TURN OUT TO BE THE BIGGEST THREAT IS THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO COAL FIRED PLANTS AS PART OF THIS NATION'S DRIVE TOWARDS ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY. RECENTLY, EPA ADMINISTRATOR DOUG COSTLE POINTED THE FINGER AT EXISTING POWER PLANTS -- NOT AT NEW GENERATING STATIONS EQUIPPED WITH ADVANCED POLLUTION CONTROL TECHNOLOGY.

BUT EVEN SO, EPA STANDARDS TODAY ONLY REQUIRE REMOVAL OF 70 PERCENT OF THE SULPHUR CONTENT OF COAL. THAT SUGGESTS TO ME THAT NO MATTER HOW MANY NEW PLANTS ARE BUILT, THE INCREASED USE OF COAL WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ACID RAIN.

THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED COAL BURNING ARE ONLY NOW BEGINNING TO SURFACE. WORLDWIDE RAIN MEASUREMENTS SHOW ACID LEVELS FIVE TO THIRTY TIMES HIGHER THAN THAT EXPECTED IN UNPOLLUTED PRECIPITATION.

YET WHILE THERE IS AGREEMENT THAT ACID RAIN EXISTS, THE RESPONSE TO THIS THREAT IS DIVERGENT.

BUT THAT DIVERSION OF OPINION MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO THWART OUR ACTIONS. NOW IS THE TIME FOR CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF PREVENTING WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION OF OUR LAKES, STREAMS, CROPLANDS AND FORESTS.

NOW IS THE TIME TO SET FORTH A CLEAR POLICY... ~~A POLICY THAT AVOIDS THE EXTREMES AND SEEKS THE MIDDLE GROUND.~~ NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE THE DECISIONS THAT WILL PRESERVE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES, NOT DESTROY THEM IN AN INVISIBLE STORM OF ACID PRECIPITATION.

SUCH A NATIONAL POLICY MUST MOVE FORWARD ON THREE FRONTS. FIRST, WE MUST DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF ACID RAIN ITSELF. WE NEED THE KIND OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH THAT WILL TELL US ONCE AND FOR ALL HOW ACID RAIN AFFECTS CROPS AND TIMBER LANDS. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEACHING OF HEAVY METALS FROM THE SOIL AND ACID RAIN. WE NEED TO EXPLORE THE MECHANISM OF LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION OF POLLUTANTS IN THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE.

ONE YEAR AGO THIS MONTH, PRESIDENT CARTER CALLED FOR A TEN YEAR FEDERAL RESEARCH PROGRAM TO EXAMINE THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF ACID RAIN. MORE THAN TEN MILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR IS TO BE SPENT ~~EACH YEAR~~ IN THAT EFFORT. ^{And,} I AM HOPEFUL THAT THIS RESEARCH WILL PROVIDE US WITH THE DATA NECESSARY TO MAKE WELL INFORMED DECISIONS FOR THE LONG TERM.

^{Speak,}
BUT EVEN AS I ~~SAY THAT~~, I AM ALSO CONVINCED THAT WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WAIT UNTIL ALL THE EVIDENCE HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND ANALYZED. THUS, I BELIEVE THAT THOUGHTFUL LEGISLATION IS THE SECOND FRONT ON WHICH WE MUST BEGIN TO MOVE.

THE RUSH TOWARD CONVERSION TO COAL HAS ALREADY BEGUN AND SHOWS NO SIGN OF ABATING. CONSIDERATION THIS SUMMER OF THE SO-CALLED "OIL BACKUP" BILL ILLUSTRATES THAT POINT. UNDER THIS BILL, 80 UTILITIES -- MAINLY IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES -- WOULD BE REQUIRED TO CONVERT FROM OIL TO COAL.

SEEING THIS AS AN EASY WAY TO SAVE ONE MILLION GALLONS OF OIL A DAY BY 1990, THE SENATE RUSHED THIS BILL THROUGH. AN EFFORT TO REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM THESE NEW COAL FIRED POWER PLANTS AND THEREBY REDUCE THE THREAT OF ACID RAIN WAS IGNORED.

GIVEN THE ANTI-REGULATORY MOOD OF THIS CONGRESS AND THE PRESSURES OF AN ELECTION YEAR, I AM DOUBTFUL THAT MUCH LEGISLATIVE ACTION WILL HAPPEN THIS YEAR. LIKewise, I HAVE SOME DOUBT WHETHER IT'S WISE TO TINKER WITH THE CLEAN AIR ACT THIS YEAR OR NEXT. ALTHOUGH THE ACT WAS CONCEIVED BEFORE THE REGIONAL NATURE OF ACID RAIN WAS FULLY UNDERSTOOD, AMENDMENTS MAY OPEN THE DOOR FOR RELAXATION OF STANDARDS.

IN THE LONG RUN, PERHAPS LOOKING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ELBOW ROOM WITHIN THE CLEAN AIR ACT IS THE BEST APPROACH.

THERE ARE OTHER LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES ~~POSSIBLE, HOWEVER,~~ UNIVERSAL COAL WASHING IS ONE. SO ARE INCENTIVES FOR DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO POWER GENERATION. MHD IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS. AND, TAX INCENTIVES FOR EMISSION REDUCTION FACILITIES ARE POSSIBLE.

ALSO, LEGISLATION IS PRESENTLY IN THE WORKS TO CREATE AN INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE WITH ENOUGH CLOUT TO MEET THIS PROBLEM HEAD ON.

THIRD, AND FINALLY, AN INTERNATIONAL AIR QUALITY AGREEMENT WITH CANADA IS LONG OVERDUE. THIS TREATY MUST DEAL WITH AIR POLLUTION AND ACID RAIN SPILLING OVER THE BORDER FROM ONE COUNTRY TO THE OTHER. IT MUST SEEK TO FIND A WAY TO SITE MAJOR PLANTS SO THAT THE POLLUTION THEY CAUSE IS NOT A PROBLEM TO THOSE JUST OVER THE BORDER.

THE ROAD TO THAT AGREEMENT IS NOT BUILT ON SELFISH PROMISES, BUT ON A GENUINE RECOGNITION THAT WHAT WE DO IN THE UNITED STATES AFFECTS THE VERY LIFE OF OUR NEIGHBORS IN CANADA.

THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT STEP DOWN THAT ROAD WAS TAKEN AUGUST 6 OF THIS YEAR WHEN OUR TWO NATIONS SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF INTENT. THE AGREEMENT WILL HOPEFULLY LEAD TO A TRANSBOUNDARY AIR QUALITY TREATY.

THE CANADIAN MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT ESTIMATED EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT 75 PERCENT OF CANADA'S ACID RAIN ORIGINATED IN THE UNITED STATES. HE NOTED THAT THIS IS ONE "TIME BOMB" WHICH HAS ALREADY EXPLODED OVER CANADA.

WE IN MONTANA CAN BE PROUD OF OUR EFFORTS TO DEFUSE THIS TIME BOMB. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE FLATHEAD BASIN STUDY AND ON THE POPLAR RIVER PROJECT HAVE PROVEN TO US THAT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IS POSSIBLE. WE SIMPLY CANNOT IGNORE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT BLOWS ACROSS OUR BORDER WITH CANADA.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS BUDDING RECOGNITION OF OUR TRANS-BORDER BOND WILL FADE IF IT IS NOT NURTURED AND CULTIVATED BY CAREFUL POLICY MAKERS ON BOTH SIDES.

THE TECHNICAL EXCHANGE THAT TOOK PLACE JUST THIS MONTH IN CRANBROOK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN RAISING THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF OUR OWN STATE DEPARTMENT -- AS WELL AS THE CANADIANS.

IN ADDITION, CANADIAN LEGISLATORS ARE ONLY TOO WILLING TO DISCUSS THESE PROBLEMS. I AM CONVINCED THAT OVER TIME, THAT DIALOGUE WILL BECOME JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE TECHNICAL EXCHANGES.

ALL TOO OFTEN, WE IN CONGRESS TEND TO PUT OFF FOR TOMORROW WHAT WE SHOULD BE DOING TODAY. PLOTTING THE WAYS TO LIMIT ACID RAIN IS ONE OF THOSE ISSUES WHICH HAS BEEN PUT ON THE BACK BURNER.

NOW IS THE TIME TO SEE THAT ACID RAIN MOVES OFF THE BACK BURNER ON TO THE FRONT BURNER. THE COST FOR DOING THAT IS MINIMAL -- FAR LESS THAN THE RESULT OF CONTINUED INACTION.

THOSE OF US IN CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION MUST NOW SHOULDER THE BURDEN FOR DEVELOPING LEGISLATION BASED UPON WHAT YOU -- THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMUNITY -- GENERATE.

WE MUST NOT SLACKEN OUR EFFORTS TO REACH AN EFFECTIVE AGREEMENT WITH OUR CANADIAN NEIGHBORS TO DEAL WITH TRANS-BOUNDARY POLLUTION.

AND, WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR CIVILIZATION AND ITS NATURAL SURROUNDINGS IS A DELICATE BALANCE. WE ARE STEWARDS OF THAT RELATIONSHIP. IT IS UP TO US TO USE OUR RESOURCES IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE PROVIDE FOR OUR BASIC NEEDS WITHOUT DESTROYING OUR ENVIRONMENT.

THAT IS OUR CHALLENGE FOR THE EIGHTIES. TOGETHER I THINK WE CAN BE SUCCESSFUL.

THANK YOU.