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New York Times

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Muskie Hails Nixon's 'Concern' On Pollution but Asks Specifics

By E. W. KENWORTHY
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 — Senator Edmund S. Muskie said today that President Nixon's "rhetoric of concern" about the environment in his State of the Union Message yesterday was "excellent" but that any final judgment of the extent of the President's commitment to environmental quality would depend on the programs he proposed and the money he requested.

The Maine Democrat, who was his party's Vice-Presidential nominee in 1968 and may be a candidate for the Presidential nomination in 1972, is the recognized Democratic spokesman on the environment. He is chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution, and has originated most of the antipollution

legislation now on the books.

At the outset of an hour-long news conference today in which he presented a legislative program for this year, Mr. Muskie said he did not expect specifics in a State of the Union Message. Nevertheless, he added that the best evidence he had been able to gather about what the President may

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propose indicated that Mr. Nixon's program would disappoint "the great expectations" he had aroused and even fall short of "programs already on the books."

Calls Statement 'Ambiguous'

For example, Mr. Muskie said that Mr. Nixon's statement yesterday about a five-year, \$10-billion clean waters program was "ambiguous" because he did not make clear whether this was to be the total cost of the program for constructing waste disposal plants or the Federal Government's contribution to it.

But the best evidence, Mr. Muskie said, is that Mr. Nixon was talking about the total cost and that the Federal Government's contribution would be spread over nine years.

Mr. Muskie noted the President had said that the program he would propose "will be the most comprehensive and costly program in this field ever in the nation's history." But he said that Mr. Nixon's program for waste disposal plants "falls

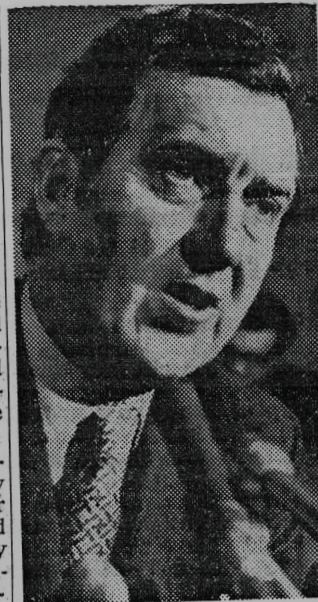
short" of the \$3.4-billion in appropriations over four years that Congress authorized in the Clean Water Restoration Act of 1966.

Uncertain About Cost

However, Mr. Nixon's program, if carried out, would exceed expenditures under the present legislation because neither President Johnson nor Mr. Nixon has requested the funds authorized. Congress, over the last three years, has voted more than the President's request but has appropriated only \$1.2-billion of the \$2.15-billion authorized for those years.

The President did not provide figures yesterday for any programs he may request for air pollution control and solid waste disposal. Nor did he say anything about industrial pollution of lakes and rivers. Therefore, Mr. Muskie said he had no idea how costly the President's entire program might be.

However, the Senator estimated the total Federal expenditures of the programs he himself will propose this year at \$15.5-billion through the



Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Washington conference.

fiscal year ending June 30, 1974.

He said this expenditure should generate at least an

equal outlay by states and municipalities. On top of this, he said, would be expenditures by private industry, which could not be estimated but which would have to be very large if the job of cleaning up air and water pollution was to be done.

Asks \$12.5-Billion Outlay

Some of the legislation in Mr. Muskie's program is already in committee and some will be introduced over the next few weeks.

In a partial breakdown of estimated Federal costs of his program, Mr. Muskie said that for water pollution he would propose Federal construction grants of \$2.5-billion a year for five years to states and cities after the expiration of the present program in 1971. This total of \$12.5-billion, he said, would be the Federal share of \$25-billion worth of facilities.

For the air quality program, Mr. Muskie said he would propose authorizations of \$975-million for the fiscal year 1971, 1972 and 1973. For solid waste disposal, his bill would author-

ize appropriations of \$772-million over four years. Both these programs expire next June 30.

Finally for noise abatement, he would authorize \$30-million, mostly for studies to be conducted by a new office of noise pollution abatement and control, which his bill would establish in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The Senator said his proposed legislation would require Federal expenditures of nearly \$2-billion in the fiscal year 1971, beginning next July, and \$3.5-billion in 1972.

"We cannot afford to spend less," Mr. Muskie said. "The environment will not wait for our priorities to reorder themselves."

Stern Penalties Backed

And, in an obvious allusion to Mr. Nixon's call yesterday for each citizen "to resolve each day" to leave his home, his property and his city "a little cleaner," Mr. Muskie said:

"You don't get it [a better environment] by exhorting housewives to clean up their litter."

Hundreds of billions would have to be spent by the turn of the century, and there must be tough penalties against the major industrial polluters, he said.

Senator Muskie said he would also propose legislation to authorize "the compensated acquisition by the Federal Government, less costs and damages, of all oil leases in the Santa Barbara Channel" and provide for the removal of all drilling platforms there.

In the year since the oil leak in the channel began, he said, the Union Oil Company has shown "an inability to cope" with it. His bill would provide that the channel's remaining oil reserves be set aside as a national reserve to be tapped only in a time of national emergency or by act of Congress.

Mr. Muskie also said he would shortly hold hearings on a bill that would provide effective public participation in the selection of sites for electric power plants and require that each power facility meet environmental standards.