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## **ABC Interview of Senators Muskie, Baker, and Nelson Following President Nixon's State of the Union Address**

Edmund S. Muskie

Howard Baker

Gaylord Nelson

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ESM: First of all, I think it's always reassuring to have a President make a commitment and to give emphasis to environmental \_\_\_\_\_ . Those of us who have fought the battle for many years always appreciate that kind of support from the White House, and the President did have the rhetoric of emphasis with him. The specifics leave me in some doubt as to exactly what he proposes. For example, his proposal of a \$10 billion nation-wide clean waters program leaves some questions unanswered: (1) how much of this would be a Federal commitment, (2) does the \$10 Billion represent his estimate of the total cost of the facilities which it is his hope to build, or is the \$10 billion the . . . . .

INTERVIEWER: Senator Muskie, we want to get back to you in just a minute. Senator Nelson, how about your general impression.

SENATOR NELSON: I think the really most significant thing about it is that the President said that the issue of the environment is the most important issue in his judgment next to peace, that he, as President, ~~has given~~ the prestige of his office, has given recognition to a problem which is critical to the future of the nation and, in that respect, has pointed up the issue and I think made it clear that Congress and the President and the rest of the country have got to do some very dramatic things about preserving the environment unless we're going to face literally disaster in another quarter of a century.

INTERVIEWER: Senator Baker, it seems that everybody in Congress these days is against pollution. The one big question hanging

over Capitol Hill is where is the money going to come from? Do you have any ideas about that?

SENATOR BAKER: I share with Senator Muskie the uncertainty of that particular aspect of it, but I think that's typical of the State of the Union message and probably essential, because in the final analysis the President has, in effect, made a commitment to clean air and clean water which Senator Muskie and I on our Committee have been huffing for for a long time and I'm most pleased to see this Administration committed to it. And then the specifics and the details will follow I'm sure in subsequent Presidential messages and hopefully as a partnership effort with the Congress in developing the appropriate mechanisms to see that this objective now stated as a national purpose is carried forward.

INTERVIEWER: Senator Muskie, if the President had declared for an Apollo program, a kind of a crash program to turn around things in pollution, how much would it cost?

ESM: It depends upon what you want to estimate. We estimate that if we were to catch up on the backlog of untreated municipal wastes along--this doesn't cover industrial wastes--we'd have to spend \$25 billion in Federal money over a five-year period or over a ten-year period if we wanted to do it in ten, except that the backlog would increase over that period. So \$25 billion over five years I think is a fair estimate of the cost of cleaning up the backlog of untreated municipal wastes. If you were to add industrial wastes I suspect you'd have to double that figure.

SENATOR NELSON: I don't think anybody knows for sure what it will take to complete the job in 20 or 30 years. It may very well be \$150 billion and when people express some shock about that I point out that it's a little more than one and one half years Defense budget and the question of the condition of our environment is critical to life here on earth.

SENATOR MUSKIE: There's another factor, I think ~~Saylord~~ Gaylord, which you've used in your estimates and that's the cost of cleaning up air pollution which is very difficult to estimate since this involves controlling emissions from particular plants all over the country and no one, I don't think has a figure.

. . . .

SENATOR BAKER: ... I don't think an industrial plant on the Hudson River ought to be ~~able~~ free to pollute and to expect the public treasury to pay the bill. I think that plant, its management and ownership and the ~~public~~ customers of its products ought to bear a ~~a~~ large share if ~~the~~ not the entire share of that cost and that would be added to the cost as well but not as a part of the Federal budget.'

SENATOR MUSKIE: I think we ought to make a distinction between industrial wastes which is not now supported in any significant degree by Federal expenditures and the cost of municipal wastes treatment plants ~~to~~ which the Federal ~~government~~ government now has a commitment of upwards of 50 to 55 percent of the cost and that's the commitment to ~~waste~~ which I address the \$25 billion figure.

INTERVIEWER: WITH This emphasis on pollution today Senator Muskie, the President gave very scarce attention to some other ~~physical~~

critical problems--housing, education and urban renewal--is the a danger that this sudden ~~polit~~ political popularity of the pollution issue is going to syphon money away from other critical domestic needs.

SENATOR MUSKIE? It will unless we put the pollution question in the broader context of in which it should be placed and which I think the President put it in. In other words, the total quality of the environment. Even air and water pollution are a product you see of what we do about housing, what we do about transportation, what we do about plant location and all of the other activities that make up an industrial society. A lot of these decisions are <sup>private</sup> ~~public~~, some of them are ~~private~~ public. A lot of the investments are private, some of them are public, but they all most be coordinated in some way orderly way. To do that involves not only money but <sup>a</sup> reform of our institutions and the President touched on that today, which would more effectively put together all of the wisdom that we ~~a~~ have in the private and public sectors to do a better job of building the urban society.

SENATOR NELSON:..It (internal combustion engines) is the largest polluter and we have to have one that doesn't pollute or convert to another engine, and if it has to be done, by legislation.

SENATOR MUSKIE: May I point out that we don't need legislatim to achieve this objective. The Air Pollution Act of 1965 created authority in the President to establish emission standards. I think ~~it~~ that ought to be used to achieve the objective which Senator Nelson has pointed out. What Senator Nelson is urging is legislation in the event existing ~~it~~ legislation is not used. I noted with interest and reassurance this morning in the Wall Street Journal (maybe I shouldn't mention publications) that the

Administration is considering 1975 as a target date for something like this kind of requirement and this is a good place to emphasize that-- I hope that the Administration moves in this direction, Gaylord, and will coincide with your own legislation and I think the intent of the legislation in 1965.

SENATOR BAKER: . . . clearly the Congress and the administrative department of government are at loggerheads over whether or not there is an immediate urgent necessity ~~the~~ to pass the President's recommendations for crime control legislation, especially as it relates to the Federal City to Washington which ought to be the example for the country and ~~the~~ which isn't. I happen to think that it is essential and ought to be passed promptly. ~~There~~ There are those of my colleagues who ~~do~~ don't share that ~~view~~ view so maybe I'll have to defer to their comments/ at this point.

ESM: It's easy in this field as in so many fields to throw the ~~blame~~ blame at somebody else. Let me make two quick points (1) we enacted the Safe Streets Act in 1968--the Administration only within the last couple of weeks released funds under that act to improve law enforcement at a local level so the delay/<sup>was</sup>in ~~the~~ the White House as well as in the Congress. Secondly, the legislation was sent up after April and Senator Baker as a lawyer ~~knows~~ knows that it takes time to work on some of the legislation in the crime control field ~~that~~ if we're really concerned that it be effective. And one of the President's notes of ~~a~~ caution this morning was that in the past we \_\_\_\_\_ at past legislation without considering whether its going to be effective. We ought to use that same \_\_\_\_\_ in the crime control field.