

**43 Radio Address About the State of the Union Message  
on Natural Resources and the Environment.**

*February 14, 1973*

*Good afternoon:*

Every year since George Washington's time, the President of the United States

has sent a message to the Congress about the State of our American Union and the measures which he felt the legislative and

executive branches of Government should take in partnership to improve it.

This year, I am presenting my State of the Union report not just in one speech but in several messages on individual topics to permit more careful consideration of the challenges we face. And because both the President and the Congress are servants of the people, I am inviting the people to join with us in considering these issues, by discussing them in a series of radio talks.

Today I want to talk with you about the first of these detailed messages, the one on the state of America's natural resources and environment, which I will send to the Congress later this week.

President Abraham Lincoln, whose memory we are honoring this week, observed in his State of the Union message in 1862 that "A nation may be said to consist of its territory, its people, and its laws. The territory," he said, "is the only part which is of certain durability."

In recent years, however, we have come to realize that what Lincoln called our "territory"—that is, our land, air, water, minerals, and the like—is not of "certain durability" after all. Instead, we have learned that these natural resources are fragile and finite, and that many have been seriously damaged or despoiled.

To put it another way, we realized that self-destructive tendencies were endangering the American earth during the 1960's in much the same way as conflicting political forces had endangered the body politic during the 1860's.

When we came to office in 1969, we tackled this challenge with all the power at our command. Now, in 1973, I can report that America is well on the way to winning the war against environmental

degradation—well on the way to making our peace with nature.

Day by day, our air is getting cleaner. In virtually every one of our major cities, the levels of air pollution are declining.

Month by month, our water pollution problems are also being conquered, our noise and pesticide problems are yielding to new initiatives, our parklands and protected wilderness areas are increasing.

Year by year, our commitment of public funds for environmental programs continues to grow. Some people claim that we are not spending enough. But they ignore the fact that Federal spending for protection of our environment and natural resources has increased fourfold in the last 4 years. In the area of water quality alone, it has grown fifteenfold. In fact, we are now buying new facilities nearly as fast as the construction industry can build them. Spending still more money would not buy us more pollution control facilities but only more expensive ones.

In addition to what Government is doing in the battle against pollution, our private industries are assuming a steadily growing share of responsibility in this field. Last year industrial spending for pollution control jumped by 50 percent. This year it could reach as much as \$5 billion.

As befits America's world leadership role, we are also moving vigorously with other nations to preserve the global environment. The United States-Soviet environmental cooperation agreement which I signed in Moscow last year makes two of the world's greatest industrial powers allies against pollution. Another agreement which we concluded last year with Canada will help to clean up the Great Lakes. The ocean-dumping curbs passed by the Congress at my urging have put

this country in the forefront of the international effort to protect the seas.

We can be proud of our record in this field over the past 4 years. But a record is not something to stand on, it is something to build on. Nineteen important natural resources and environmental bills which I submitted to the last Congress were not enacted. In the coming weeks, I shall once again send these urgently needed proposals to the Congress so that the unfinished environmental business of the 92d Congress can become the first environmental achievements of the 93d Congress.

Let me highlight three of the other major subjects which we will be addressing in 1973: wise land use, energy, and a healthy, expanding farm economy.

Land in America is no longer a resource we can take for granted. We no longer live with an open frontier. Just as we must conserve and protect our air and our water, so we must conserve and protect the land—and plan for its wise and balanced use. Some progress is being made—but antiquated land-use laws, overlapping jurisdictions, and outdated institutions are still permitting haphazard development which can spoil both the utility and the beauty of the land.

That is why I will urge passage again this year of legislation designed to encourage States to establish effective means of controlling land use. That is why I will reintroduce my proposals to bring coherence to Federal mining and mineral leasing laws, better management of the Federal lands, and enlightened regulation of surface and underground mining.

The energy crisis was dramatized by fuel shortages this winter. We must face up to a stark fact. We are now consuming more energy than we produce in America. A year and a half ago I sent to the Con-

gress the first Presidential message ever devoted to the energy question. I shall soon submit a new and far more comprehensive energy message containing wide-ranging initiatives to insure necessary supplies of energy at acceptable economic and environmental costs. In the meantime, to help meet immediate needs, I have temporarily suspended import quotas on home heating oil east of the Rocky Mountains.

Energy policy will continue to be a matter of the highest priority, as shown by my budget proposal to increase funding for energy research and development even in a tight budget year.

One of the most precious natural resources since our earliest days has been American agriculture. Our farmers have kept us the best fed, best clothed nation in the history of mankind, while enabling us to export farm products at a level that will reach an alltime annual record of \$10 billion this year. Net farm income last year also reached a record high—over \$19 billion, an increase of 30 percent over 4 years.

This Administration has responded to the farmer's desire for less Federal intervention by giving him expanded opportunity in planting his acreage. The day is gone when Washington can enlarge its role on the farm at the expense of the farmer's freedom to make his own decisions. The goal of all our farm policies and programs is just the reverse. We want freer markets and expanded individual responsibility. We want to keep the farmer on his land and the Government off.

I shall recommend a number of additional initiatives to preserve and enhance our natural resources in the State of the Union report on this topic to the Congress later in the week.

These then are the basic principles which should continue to guide all our efforts in environment and natural resources policy in the future.

First, we must strike a balance so that the protection of our irreplaceable heritage becomes as important as its use. The price of economic growth need not and will not be deterioration in the quality of our lives and our surroundings.

Second, because there are no local or State boundaries to the problems of our environment, the Federal Government must play an active, positive role. We can and will set standards. We can and will exercise leadership. We are providing necessary funding support. And we will provide encouragement and incentive for others to help with the job. But Washington must not displace State and local initiative. We shall expect the State and local governments—along with the private sector—to play the central role in this field.

Third, the costs of pollution should be more fully met in the free marketplace, not in the Federal budget. For example, the price of pollution control devices for automobiles should be borne by the owner and the user, not by the general taxpayer. People should not have to pay for pollution they do not cause.

Fourth, we must realize that each individual must take the responsibility for looking after his own home and workplace. These daily surroundings are the environment where most Americans spend most of their time. They reflect people's pride in themselves and their consideration for their communities. Your backyard is not the domain of the Federal Government.

Finally, we must remain confident that America's technological and economic

ingenuity will be equal to our environmental challenges. We will not look upon these challenges as insurmountable obstacles. Instead, we shall convert the so-called crisis of the environment into an opportunity for unprecedented progress.

Now is the time to stop the handwringing and roll up our sleeves and get on with the job. Now is the time to reject the doomsday mentality which says we are destined to pollute ourselves out of existence.

The advocates of defeatism warn us of all that is wrong. I remind them and all Americans of our genius for responsive adaptability and our enormous reservoir of spirit. The destiny of our land, the air we breathe, the water we drink is not in the mystical hands of an uncontrollable agent, it is in our hands. A future which brings the balancing of our resources—preserving quality with quantity—is a future limited only by the boundaries of our will to get the job done.

Each one of us has a personal stake in the task ahead. The choice is always ours, for better or for worse. Above all, we need pride in this beautiful country of ours, belief in our own strength and resourcefulness.

One of the most memorable experiences I have had as President occurred last year during my visit to the People's Republic of China when the Chinese Army Band played "America the Beautiful." This song of tribute to our Nation was also played at my inauguration 4 years ago and again this year.

No one will sing "America the Beautiful" with greater feeling than our prisoners of war as they return home from years of Communist captivity in Indochina.

America is a beautiful country. By our

commitment to conservation, restoration, and renewal, let us resolve to make America even more beautiful for the generations to come.

Thank you and good afternoon.

**NOTE:** The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. The address was broadcast live on nationwide radio.

An advance text of the President's address was released on the same day.