

## FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT

The \$24 BILLION Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (H.R. 11896), which establishes comprehensive regulations and grant programs to control and abate water pollution, is scheduled for House action beginning Monday, March 27.

Numerous amendments are expected. Six amendments are included in a "Clean Water Package" sponsored by Reps. Reuss and Dingell and a bi-partisan group of 40 other Members. General debate on the bill is scheduled for Monday, March 27, with votes on amendments Tuesday, March 28.

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### Section III

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HOUSE AND SENATE BILLS

Following are the major differences between S. 2770, which passed the Senate by a unanimous vote of 86 YEAS on November 2, and H.R. 11896, the House Public Works Committee bill:

### ZERO DISCHARGE GOALS

The House bill declares it a national goal to eliminate the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters by 1985. An interim goal is to achieve a water quality suitable for swimming and fish propagation by 1981. These goals would not be implemented unless Congress enacts affirmative legislation after a two-year feasibility study by the National Academy of Sciences.

The Senate bill states that the goal of zero discharge into the nation's waters by 1985 is a national policy rather than a national goal. That bill also declares it an interim goal to achieve a water quality suitable for swimming by 1981. There is no provision for a feasibility study.

### FUNDING LEVEL AND GRANT PROGRAM

The House bill authorizes a total spending level of \$24.62 BILLION through FY 1975. Nearly 75% of that total, \$18.35 BILLION, is authorized for grants for the construction of waste treatment facilities. These grants would be allotted to the states on the basis of need, with a maximum federal share of 75% if the state agrees to pay 15% of the cost.

The Senate bill authorizes a total spending level of \$20 BILLION, of which \$14 BILLION is authorized for waste treatment construction grants. These grants would be allotted to the states on the basis of population, with a maximum federal share of 70% if the state agrees to pay 10%.

### DISCHARGE PERMIT PROGRAM

The House bill establishes a federal-state permit program whereby the states may issue discharge permits according to guidelines prescribed by EPA. If the Environmental Protection Agency determines that a state is not administering its program according to the requirements of the Act, EPA may withdraw its approval of the entire program and take over its administration. The House bill also provides that no new discharge permits may be issued under the 1899 Refuse Act and that existing permits issued under that Act would be considered permits under the new program.

The Senate bill also provides for the establishment of state permit programs according to EPA guidelines and subject to EPA approval. The Senate bill differs by granting the Environmental Protection Agency continuing permit-by-permit veto power. That bill does not abolish the 1899 permit program and does not stipulate that permits issued under the new law satisfy the requirements of the 1899 Refuse Act.

#### CITIZEN SUITS

The House bill authorizes citizen suits against polluters or against the Administrator of EPA. Such actions would be restricted to citizens who are directly affected in the area where the violation occurred or to groups that have been actively engaged in the administrative proceedings.

The Senate bill allows any citizen to bring suit against polluters who are alleged to be violating standards, or against the Administrator of EPA if he fails to carry out the requirements of the Act.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCING

The House bill sets up an Environmental Financing Authority in the Treasury Department to help those local communities unable to borrow funds to pay their share of waste treatment construction grants. This Financing Authority, with an initial authorization of \$100 million, would lend funds to those communities at reasonable interest rates.

The Senate bill contains no comparable provision.