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REPORT TO THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES  
AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE  
AND FISHERIES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Adequacy Of Selected Environmental  
Impact Statements Prepared Under  
The National Environmental  
Policy Act Of 1969 B 170186

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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NOV. 27, 1972



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON D C 20546

B-170186

Dear Mr Chairman

In response to your request of May 18, 1971, this is our report on the adequacy of selected environmental impact statements prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

Our principal observations are summarized in the digest. Because of your desire to expedite the issuance of this report, we did not obtain advance review and comments from the departments included in the review. The matters presented in this report, however, were discussed with agency officials at the regional and Washington levels.

Two of the projects included in our review--the Corps of Engineers' proposed Bonneville Second Powerhouse on the Columbia River and the Forest Service's proposed Elk Mountain Road in the Santa Fe National Forest--are currently involved in litigation against the Government concerning their environmental impacts.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and members of the Yakima Indian Tribe filed suit in the District Court of the United States for Oregon against representatives of the Corps of Engineers and the Bonneville Power Administration because they believed the construction of the proposed Bonneville Powerhouse violated treaties. The legality of granting funds for the proposed Elk Mountain Road prior to preparing an environmental impact statement was contested by a group of citizens because they believed that the road would destroy the wilderness character of the area and the adjacent Pecos Wilderness. Some of the details concerning the litigation are discussed in chapter 2. We wish to point out that, although our findings are not to be construed as comments on the legal adequacy of the statements involved, public disclosure of this report, as it relates to these projects, possibly could prejudice the Government's cases.

We believe that the contents of this report would be of interest to executive departments and agencies of the Government. However,

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release of this report will be made only after your agreement has been obtained or public announcement has been made by you concerning the contents of the report.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Thomas B. Staats". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Comptroller General  
of the United States

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Fisheries  
and Wildlife Conservation  
Committee on Merchant Marine  
and Fisheries  
House of Representatives

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ABBREVIATIONS

GAO	General Accounting Office
SCS	Soil Conservation Service
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
BOR	Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT TO  
THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES  
AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE  
AND FISHERIES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADEQUACY OF SELECTED ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENTS PREPARED UNDER  
THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY  
ACT OF 1969 B-170186

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

The Chairman, Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, requested the General Accounting Office (GAO) to evaluate the implementation of section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the adequacy of selected environmental impact statements prepared under the section 102 requirement

A GAO report issued May 18, 1972, dealt with improvements needed in Federal agency procedures for implementing the act. This report deals with the adequacy of selected environmental impact statements. Because of the desire of the Chairman to expedite the processing of this report, GAO did not obtain advance review and comments from the departments included in the review.

Background

Section 102 requires Federal agencies proposing legislation or similarly important actions that will significantly affect the quality of man's environment to include with the proposals detailed statements on:

- The environmental impacts of the proposed actions
- Any adverse environmental effects

which cannot be avoided should the proposals be implemented

- Alternatives to the proposed actions
- The relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity
- Any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources involved in the proposed actions should they be implemented

These points are usually considered and discussed in environmental impact statements.

Section 102 of the act also requires Federal agencies to obtain comments of other Federal agencies with jurisdiction or special knowledge of possible impacts on the environment. The objective of this requirement is to induce agencies to consider carefully the environmental impacts of proposed actions. Copies of the statements with comments by Federal, State, and local agencies must be made available to the President, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the public.

GAO selected the following environmental impact statements for review

- The Soil Conservation Service's

statement for the proposed East Fork of the Whitewater River Watershed Project, Indiana and Ohio

- The Corps of Engineers' statement for the proposed Bonneville Second Powerhouse on the Columbia River, Oregon and Washington
- The Bureau of Reclamation's statement for the proposed Archer-Weld Transmission Line and Weld Substation, Colorado River Storage Project, Colorado
- The Federal Highway Administration's statement for the proposed Hamilton-Clermont limited-access highway in Ohio
- The Forest Service's statement for the proposed Elk Mountain Road in the Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development's statement for the proposed new community of Riverton in Monroe County, New York

#### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

GAO's review of the statements indicated that the Federal agencies were definitely concerned about the environmental impacts of their proposed projects. However, the usefulness of the statements reviewed by GAO in planning and making decisions was impaired by the following common problems

- Inadequate discussion of, and support for, the identified environmental impacts
- Inadequate treatment of reviewing agencies' comments on environmental impacts

--Inadequate consideration of alternatives and their environmental impacts

In addition, GAO noted the following shortcomings in individual statements

#### East Fork of the Whitewater River Watershed Project

The statement did not discuss the (1) impact on water quality resulting from the proposed project or (2) relocation of businesses and private dwellings resulting from acquisition of lands for the project

The statement was neither prepared in time to be available to the various agencies during their field reviews of the project work plan, contrary to agency guidelines, nor made available for public comment. (See pp. 8 to 16 )

#### Hamilton-Clermont highway

The statement (1) was not made available to two Federal agencies for comment although certain identified environmental impacts were within their areas of expertise, (2) did not include the impact that salt, oil, and gasoline on the highway would have on the Little Miami River, and (3) did not deal with certain public comments. (See pp. 25 to 31.)

#### The new community of Riverton

The statement did not (1) discuss the impact the proposed community would have on the existing community of Scottsville, New York, (2) discuss the alternative of constructing the new community at a different location, and (3) adequately assess adverse environmental effects the proposed community might have or measures that might minimize those

effects HUD decided to offer a financial guarantee commitment to the community developer before the statement was completed (See pp 36 to 43.)



INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, in a letter dated May 18, 1971 (see app. I), requested that the General Accounting Office evaluate the implementation of section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) to determine whether such implementation was uniformly and systematically in accordance with applicable legislation. In a report to the Chairman entitled "Improvements Needed in Federal Efforts to Implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969" (B-170186, May 18, 1972), we commented on selected Federal agencies' procedures for preparing environmental impact statements on legislative proposals and other major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

The Chairman also asked us to evaluate the adequacy of selected environmental impact statements prepared by the agencies. This report deals with that request.

Section 102 of the act requires Federal agencies preparing the statements to consider

- the environmental impacts of the proposed actions,
- any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposals be implemented,
- alternatives to the proposed actions,
- the relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and
- any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources involved in the proposed actions should they be implemented.

Before preparing statements on proposals, Federal agencies are required to consult with, and obtain the comments

of, any other Federal agency having jurisdiction, by law or special expertise, with respect to any environmental impact involved. Copies of the statements and the comments and views of the appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards are to be made available to the President, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the public and are to accompany the proposals through existing agency review processes. The objective of this requirement is to build into the agencies' decisionmaking process an appropriate and careful consideration of the environmental impacts of proposed actions.

We selected the Federal agencies and statements for review through consultation with the Subcommittee staff. For each of six agencies we selected one statement which had been processed at least to the point of receipt and disposition of agency and public comments on the draft and which appeared to be of significant importance. The statements selected for review were.

- The Soil Conservation Service's (SCS's) statement for the proposed East Fork of the Whitewater River Watershed Project, Indiana and Ohio.
- The Corps of Engineers' statement for the proposed Bonneville Second Powerhouse on the Columbia River, Oregon and Washington.
- The Bureau of Reclamation's statement for the proposed Archer-Weld Transmission Line and Weld Substation, Colorado River Storage Project, Colorado.
- The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) statement for the proposed Hamilton-Clermont limited-access highway, Ohio.
- The Forest Service's statement for the proposed Elk Mountain Road in the Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) statement for the proposed new community of Riverton in Monroe County, New York.

We examined the content of each selected statement and the supporting records and documents; reviewed comments received on the statements from Federal, State, and local agencies and the public; and interviewed officials of the selected Federal agencies and of the commenting agencies.

## CHAPTER 2

### EVALUATION OF THE ADEQUACY OF

#### SELECTED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

Our review indicated that the agencies were definitely concerned about the environmental impacts of their proposed projects. Our review indicated also that the usefulness of each of the statements to agencies in their planning and decisionmaking had been impaired by the following common problems.

- Inadequate discussion of, and support for, identified environmental impacts.
- Inadequate treatment of reviewing agencies' comments on environmental impacts.
- Inadequate consideration of alternatives and their environmental impacts.

These and other inadequacies in individual impact statements are discussed in the following sections of this report.

#### EAST FORK OF THE WHITEWATER RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT, SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

The East Fork of the Whitewater River Watershed Project, authorized for planning in 1968, includes (1) 47 small lakes to help control sedimentation, (2) three multiple-purpose reservoirs for flood prevention and public recreation, (3) two multiple-purpose reservoirs for flood prevention and municipal and industrial water supply, (4) one single-purpose floodwater-retarding reservoir, (5) approximately 20 miles of multiple-purpose channel improvement, and (6) about 10 miles of stream environmental corridor development (between Richmond, Indiana, and the Corps of Engineers' Brookville Reservoir<sup>1</sup> in Indiana) for public recreation and

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The Brookville Reservoir is a multiple-purpose project which will provide flood control, water supply, and recreation. The project, estimated to cost about \$40 million, is scheduled for completion in March 1974.

wildlife sanctuaries. The primary objectives of the project are to provide (1) outdoor recreation, (2) additional water supply for Richmond, and (3) reduction of sedimentation and floodwater damages in the watershed.

SCS financed the planning for the project and, after the Congress approves and authorizes it, plans to finance approximately 30 percent of the estimated project cost of \$10.5 million.

On October 20, 1971, SCS submitted a draft statement to the Council on Environmental Quality, other Federal agencies, the Governors of Indiana and Ohio, and the State clearinghouses for review and comment. The final statement was prepared by the SCS State office in Indiana and filed with the Council on July 25, 1972.

SCS's final statement for the proposed East Fork Project did not adequately discuss (1) the impact of the project operation on water quality--stream flow, temperature, pollution, and sedimentation, (2) project alternatives and their environmental impacts, and (3) the relocation of businesses and private dwellings resulting from the acquisition of lands for the project. SCS did not prepare a draft statement for the project in time to accompany the project draft work plan sent to the various Federal, State, and local agencies for informal field review. SCS did not make the draft statement available to the public for comment.

### Impacts on water quality

#### Stream flow and water temperature

The proposed watershed project is located upstream from the Corps of Engineers' Brookville Reservoir and includes 47 small lakes ranging from 8 to 20 acres and six reservoirs ranging from 32 to 474 acres. The plans provide for locating four of the six reservoirs on tributaries having perennial flow and, under normal conditions, for controlling approximately 25 percent of the water entering the Brookville Reservoir. The plans provide also for the six reservoirs to have a constant-level water pool and for water to be released only if that level is exceeded. Construction of the reservoirs will raise the temperature of the water because

a larger water surface area will be exposed to direct sunlight than is exposed under existing stream conditions.

In commenting on the draft statement, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources stated that, due to the fishery resources in the area, water temperature and stream flow should be maintained or improved. SCS's response to this comment was limited to a discussion of the effects on fish in 2.3 miles of the East Fork in Ohio. SCS concluded that, since existing shade would not be disturbed in this section, water temperature would not be affected. SCS did not mention in the final statement the effects on stream flow or water temperature at the proposed reservoir sites.

SCS officials in Indiana advised us that water quality is not a project purpose and that, under normal conditions, the plans for operating the reservoirs do not provide for controlled releases of water to regulate stream flow or to maintain water temperature.

The officials advised us also that during a drought, when water flow into the reservoirs is less than the evaporation loss, the water level may fall below the constant-level water pool and that, when the reservoirs are being filled, they do not plan to release water to maintain stream flow comparable to that currently existing.

SCS should have disclosed in the draft statement that no plans had been made for releasing water to maintain stream flow or water temperature at the reservoirs. This would have enabled the public and the various Federal, State, and local agencies having jurisdiction or special expertise to consider the effects of the lack of such plans on water quality. We believe that reducing or eliminating stream flow, particularly during a drought, possibly could have adverse effects on fish and wildlife resources, on property owners who rely on stream flow for agricultural purposes, and on the Brookville Reservoir's ability to supply water.

#### Water pollution

The statement lists as favorable environmental effects to be provided by the project (1) recreational opportunities for an estimated 238,700 visitor-days annually and

(2) municipal and industrial water supply to meet the year 2020's projected needs for Richmond, allowing for continued residential and industrial growth

In commenting on the section of the draft statement on recreational and water supply functions, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggested that the following adverse environmental effects be identified in the final statement

1. Water and other pollution will increase in the project areas--not only temporarily during construction but also after the project is completed--due to increased human activity evolving around recreation and other activities.
2. The water supply aspects of the project will increase municipal and industrial activities in and below Richmond, which could increase water quality problems.

In response to the first comment, SCS revised the section of the statement entitled "adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided" to state that air and water quality would be affected during and after construction of the project. SCS officials advised us that they had based this revision on their professional judgment, had not made studies, and had not consulted with other agencies to determine the extent of these environmental effects.

SCS made no change in the statement concerning the effect that increased water supply for municipal and industrial activities would have on water quality. Although the final statement does say that additional stream flow at Richmond is currently needed for sewage dilution, it does not state the amount of water that is needed or whether it will be available after the project is completed. The Ohio River Basin Comprehensive Survey, which was used to project water supply needs for the project, indicated that about 45 cubic feet per second are currently needed for sewage dilution below Richmond but that only 2 cubic feet per second of dependable flow are available.

In commenting on this aspect of the project, the Indiana Board of Health, which is responsible for maintaining

the State's water quality, stated that the draft statement lacked sufficient details on the development of municipal and industrial water supply to permit specific comments. The board requested SCS to submit additional information as soon as it was developed.

Board officials told us that about 12 million gallons of sewage per day is discharged by the Richmond sewage treatment plant into the East Fork and that about 25 million to 30 million gallons of water per day (39 to 46 cubic feet per second) are needed for sewage dilution at certain times to maintain water quality. They stated that, although they had not received the additional information requested, they question whether the completed project could provide the water needed annually for sewage dilution. The officials stated also that, when the Richmond Sanitary District provides advanced waste treatment, the water needed for sewage dilution would be somewhat less than is currently needed but that by 1990 as much or more would be needed.

SCS should have studied and more fully discussed in the final statement the possible increase in water pollution resulting from recreational activities. SCS should have determined and discussed in the statement whether the water would be available for sewage dilution after completion of the project and whether the proposed allocation of water for municipal and industrial purposes would further aggravate the water pollution problems in the East Fork at Richmond.

#### Sedimentation

Sedimentation results from soil erosion and adversely affects reservoirs by reducing storage capacity, increasing the cost of water purification, and reducing the overall attractiveness of the body of water for recreational purposes. A primary objective of the East Fork Project is to reduce sedimentation from other projects in the watershed area by trapping the sedimentation in small lakes and reservoirs. Another objective is to provide recreation and fish and wildlife use opportunities.

In commenting on the draft statement, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources stated that:



"the effects on water quality with a reduction of sedimentation in streams and reservoirs merits further discussion. This has a direct bearing on the amount of agricultural nutrients that enter the various bodies of water and the composition of aquatic organisms in the stream system."

EPA, in commenting on this aspect, stated that "agri-nutrient build up in the reservoirs is a possibility that could adversely affect water quality."

In response to these comments, SCS revised the statement to say that (1) agricultural nutrients and aquatic organisms were expected to be less concentrated in the stream system and (2) water quality would be improved by trapping sedimentation in reservoirs and additional land conservation measures. However, SCS made no revision to recognize the possible effect of the agri-nutrient buildup in the lakes and reservoirs.

SCS officials advised us that they had based the revisions on their professional judgment, had not made studies, and had not consulted with other agencies to evaluate the extent of these environmental effects.

We discussed the effects of sedimentation and agri-nutrient buildup in the proposed lakes and reservoirs with EPA officials. They stated that, if the buildup is excessive, a potential exists for a number of water quality problems--such as nuisance algae growths and objectionable taste and odor--and that these problems could adversely affect municipal and industrial water supply and could result in reduced recreational use of the lakes and reservoirs.

SCS should have studied and more clearly discussed in the final statement the possible effects of sedimentation and agri-nutrient buildup on water supply and recreational activities.

#### Project alternatives

Even though the proposed East Fork Project is a multiple-purpose development, the final statement listed several single-purpose alternatives to the project but did not

adequately discuss the alternatives or the environmental impacts of these alternatives. The alternatives included (1) alternative sites for flood-retarding structures, (2) flood prevention by land treatment, (3) ground water for municipal and industrial uses, and (4) expansion of existing recreational facilities in the project areas, including Corps projects

The impact statement did not present any information on the environmental impacts of the listed alternatives. The Council's guidelines require not only a rigorous exploration and description of alternatives but also an analysis of their environmental impacts. Therefore, the statement should have discussed the environmental impact of each of the listed alternatives.

Our review showed that the first three alternatives were rejected primarily because they could not meet the multiple objectives of the proposed project. For example, flood prevention by land treatment was rejected because it would not provide for the recreation and/or water supply objectives desired by the watershed sponsors. The statement did not, however, present this alternative with a combination of other single-purpose alternatives which possibly could have met the overall objectives of the project.

The final statement stated that SCS had not considered an expansion of existing or planned recreation facilities because such facilities would not meet the recreation demands of the area. The statement did not, however, contain any facts on why this alternative was not acceptable even though SCS guidelines require such information.

Our review showed that extensive recreation facilities are proposed at the Corps' Brookville Reservoir and that the completion of those facilities would satisfy many of the recreation needs of the area. The impact statement should have discussed a combination of alternatives, including the expansion of existing Corps facilities, so that all reviewers and SCS could have considered a viable alternative.

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Relocation of businesses  
and private dwellings

SCS officials informed us that, if the proposed East Fork Project were constructed, 18 farms, 23 owner-occupied dwellings, 11 tenant-occupied dwellings, and two mobile homes would have to be relocated, which would affect about 136 persons. This information should have been disclosed in the statement. SCS officials in Indiana agreed and told us that the nondisclosure was a serious omission.

Statement not available during field review

SCS procedures provide for a draft statement for a proposed project to accompany the draft work plan for the project through its informal field review by Federal, State, and local agencies. SCS did not prepare the draft statement for the East Fork Project until June 1971, 2 months after it sent the draft work plan to the agencies for informal review and 1 month after the sponsors approved and signed the work plan. SCS should have delayed sending the draft work plan to the agencies for review until the draft statement was available so that the agencies' comments on the statement would have been available for project sponsors' consideration in arriving at their decision to approve the work plan.

Public participation

SCS released the draft statement on October 20, 1971, but did not publicly announce its availability in the newspapers, on the radio, or through any other media, nor did it hold a public meeting to discuss the statement. SCS officials in Indiana advised us that they do not intend to obtain any public comments or hold any public meetings to discuss the final statement because, in their opinion, the public had sufficient opportunity to comment on the project during the public meetings which were held to discuss the draft work plan. However, the last public meeting took place on August 7, 1970, and as previously noted, a draft statement was not available at that time.

SCS officials in Washington advised us that SCS had presented and discussed environmental information at the

public meetings. However, in reviewing the minutes for the meetings, we found that SCS had presented the environmental impacts very generally and had not discussed the adverse effects of the proposed project on the surrounding areas.

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BONNEVILLE SECOND POWERHOUSE  
ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER,  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The Corps' Portland, Oregon, district prepared a draft statement showing the environmental impact of the proposed construction of an eight-unit second powerhouse at the existing Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River. The district made the draft statement, dated August 5, 1971, available to the various Federal, State, and local agencies and to the public for comment. The district included its responses to the comments received in a separate section of the final statement, which it filed with the Council on April 10, 1972.

Subsequent to our review, court action was initiated that may ultimately affect the second powerhouse project. On March 14, 1972, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and members of the Yakima Indian Tribe brought suit in the District Court of the United States for Oregon, against representatives of the Corps and the Bonneville Power Administration. The suit asked for an injunction against the planned construction and alteration of power-generating facilities at three dams on the Columbia River (Bonneville, the Dalles, and John Day), on the basis that the construction violated treaties. On March 30, 1972, the court suspended issuance of an injunction as long as the parties to the suit attempt to resolve their differences in a manner satisfactory to the court. As of August 30, 1972, negotiations between the Corps and the Confederated Tribes were still underway.

The final statement for the proposed second powerhouse did not adequately discuss (1) the impact on fish from the operation of the project, (2) the economic impact on the region from the production of additional hydroelectric power, and (3) project alternatives. Also, the identified environmental impacts were not adequately supported.

Impacts on fish

The Corps did not adequately assess the impact of the proposed project on fish in the Columbia River.

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The statement indicates that general and peaking<sup>1</sup> operations of the proposed project would have a definite impact on fish. First, general operations would (1) under certain conditions, reduce fish fatalities by lowering the level of nitrogen supersaturation<sup>2</sup> as more water passed through the additional turbines than over the spillway, (2) increase fish fatalities because more fish would pass through the additional turbines, and (3) make fish more vulnerable to predators as a result of disorientation.

Secondly, the peaking operations would cause (1) delays to upstream and downstream passage of anadromous fish<sup>3</sup> because of altered flow conditions at fishways, (2) partial loss of spawning areas for salmon and other fish, and (3) increased difficulty in sport, commercial, and Indian fishing. A major factor in the Corps' justification for constructing the second powerhouse was the contribution it would make to meeting peak demands for electric power.

With regard to the impact of general operations on fish, the draft statement stated that:

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<sup>1</sup>Hydroelectric power is produced by generators operated by water passing from one side of a dam to the other through turbines. As the demand for electricity increases during a day and fossil-fuel plants are unable to meet the demand, additional water is released through the turbines. The result can be a significant change in the water level on both sides of the dam. The process is referred to as peaking operation.

<sup>2</sup>Water falling over the spillway of a dam traps air and carries it beneath the water surface. Some of the trapped air gases dissolve into the water, resulting in supersaturation of nitrogen. Supersaturated water can kill fish under severe conditions.

<sup>3</sup>Anadromous fish spend most of their lives in salt water but migrate to fresh water for breeding.

"The majority of downstream migrant fish now pass Bonneville through the powerhouse turbines or over the spillway. The proposed powerhouse will increase the number of migrants that will pass through the turbines. Mortality rates of downstream migrants directly associated with passage probably will not change."

In commenting on the draft statement, Federal and State agencies expressed concern that the mortality rate would, in fact, increase because more fish would have to pass through the turbines. For example, the Oregon Fish Commission commented that the above-quoted statement is contrary to the well established fact that the mortality rate of fish passing through turbines of the type proposed at Bonneville is many times greater than that of fish passing over the dam. The Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service made similar comments.

As a result of these comments, the final statement included a statement that the fish mortality rate, resulting from operating the additional turbines at Bonneville, would increase to a maximum of 11 percent and that half of the increase was indirect, that is, caused by disorientation which makes fish more vulnerable to predators.

The Corps' documents supporting the 11-percent mortality rate did not include an allowance for predation. We discussed this matter with representatives of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Oregon Fish Commission, who stated that the 11-percent mortality rate appears to be satisfactory if it is not intended to include mortality due to predation. They stated also that studies at Ice Harbor Dam by the National Marine Fisheries Service have shown that mortality rates may go as high as 30 percent due to fish passing through turbines and predation. They also said that the Corps should have determined the effects of predation on the fish passing through the turbines and should have clearly supported the use of the 11-percent mortality rate.

In addition to preparing the statement for the second powerhouse, the Corps prepared a statement on the proposed peaking operations on the Columbia River. The Corps sent both draft statements under one cover, and the majority of

the comments received from other agencies concerned both statements.

Little is apparently known of the specific effects of peaking operations on fish. The Oregon, Washington, and Idaho fish and game agencies expressed concern over these effects in a joint statement to the Corps on the environmental impacts of the peaking operations involving Bonneville Dam. They commented as follows on the value of a Corps fisheries impact study.

"The fisheries impact study consists of only a survey of the existing, limited knowledge on the effects of flow and river level changes on fish life. Unfortunately, it is not a study of the pertinent cause and effect relationships between peaking operations and fish. Little is known of the serious effects of peaking on fish - their nature, degree, and the means of minimizing adverse conditions."

The three State fishery agencies also expressed dissatisfaction with the Corps' approach to determining the effects the peaking operations would have on fish. They stated that:

"The fishery agencies are generally dissatisfied with the approach the Corps has taken to define the impact of the proposed actions on fisheries. We find ourselves in a situation where immediate action is necessary yet we are without adequate knowledge to make decisions as to which set of operating conditions and which type of powerhouse will best serve the interests of fish."

The final statement indicated that, although the specific effects of peaking on fish were not known, the Corps would proceed with the proposed project. The Corps stated that:

"Because peaking operation is not irreversible, we believe that implementation of the proposed action affords the best opportunity to assess accurately the relationship between peaking operations and fish."



The final statement on the project and on the peaking operations did not explain why the peaking operations are not irreversible. Although this may be so, a constructed second powerhouse would be an irretrievable commitment of the resources used in its construction. Proceeding with the construction of the second powerhouse without knowing the effect of peaking operations on fish could conceivably result in not providing necessary fish-protection measures.

#### Economic impact

The final statement for the proposed project did not adequately discuss how the additional hydroelectric power to be generated by the second powerhouse would influence growth and development in the Pacific Northwest.

The statement acknowledged in a general way that the second powerhouse would influence expansion and development by stating that:

"Secondary effects relating to land use would involve possible construction or expansion, and subsequent operation, of developments in the Pacific Northwest as a consequence of the power production from the second powerhouse."

The statement also indicated that these effects have not been specifically identified because:

"The electric power distribution system is too interconnected and consumption too diffuse for those effects to be specifically identified."

Although the Corps acknowledged that power production from the second powerhouse would have some secondary effects on land use, we believe the statement should have identified and discussed the impact of expanding power production in the Pacific Northwest.

#### Project alternatives

The final statement neither adequately discussed the environmental impacts associated with alternatives to the proposed second powerhouse nor presented or supported the

conclusion that the proposed second powerhouse was the best available alternative.

The statement listed three basic alternatives.

--Using alternative sites and sizes for the proposed eight-unit powerhouse.

--Abandoning plans for the second powerhouse and foregoing the additional power-generating capacity it represents.

--Using alternative means of generating an equivalent amount of electricity.

The Corps studied 11 alternative sites while planning for the second powerhouse. The statement briefly stated why the Corps had rejected the other 10 sites but did not include any details on the environmental impacts of those sites. For example, the statement pointed out that the Corps had not selected two of the alternative sites because of the additional costs involved and mentioned the structural differences between the two sites and the proposed site, but it contained no details on the environmental impacts of the two sites. The statement should have dealt with these impacts because the additional costs involved might have been justified on the basis of the environmental benefits that could have been realized.

In discussing the possibility of abandoning plans for constructing the second powerhouse ("no action" alternative), the statement indicates that even without the second powerhouse, alternative generating capability would be provided.

"Without the second powerhouse \*\*\* an alternative generating capability would almost certainly be provided. The largest portion of that capability would probably be provided by a base-load thermal plant, either nuclear or fossil-fueled, located in the Pacific Northwest. The balance of the alternative capability would probably be provided by a gas turbine peaking plant. The impacts related to those plants (use of construction materials and non-renewable fuel resources, generation of waste heat, etc.) would then occur in

the Pacific Northwest in lieu of the second powerhouse impacts."

However, the statement collectively rejected these alternatives on the basis that:

"\*\*\* a comparison of the economic, social, and fishery benefits of power production and reduced nitrogen supersaturation, with the monetary, material, fishery, wildlife, and social costs of relocations, resource, consumption, increased fingerling mortality, and other factors, indicated the proposed action as more responsive to total human and environmental needs."

In our opinion, the above statement did not explain what environmental impacts had been compared or what environmental trade-offs might have been made. We therefore asked the Portland district to provide us with detailed data supporting the statement. We were informed that the statement was a professional opinion of district and division officials and was not based on a formal comparison as stated.

Because a comparison of alternatives was a key element in deciding to go ahead with the proposed second powerhouse, we believe that the statement should have attributed the comparison to professional opinion, identified the professional expertise of the person(s) who made the comparison, and presented details on how the comparisons were made and on the specific results of the comparison which led to the conclusion that the second powerhouse is the most responsive to needs.

ARCHER-WELD TRANSMISSION LINE AND WELD  
SUBSTATION, COLORADO RIVER STORAGE  
PROJECT, BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

The Archer-Weld 230-KV Transmission Line and Weld Substation Project is an extension of the Bureau of Reclamation's Colorado River Storage Project transmission system which is designed to deliver electrical energy to power market centers in northern Colorado. The Archer-Weld Project was authorized prior to the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The following dates provide a brief chronological history of selected project events.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| December 1968    | Transmission line surveying was initiated.  |
| March 8, 1971    | Draft statement was filed with the Council. |
| November 2, 1971 | Final statement was filed with the Council. |
| January 12, 1972 | Phase I contract was awarded.               |

The statement did not adequately discuss the effects that the additional electrical energy supplied by the transmission line and substation would have on growth and development in northern Colorado.

Social and economic impacts result from supplying additional electrical energy. These impacts include population growth, industrial expansion, and increased urbanization. Such impacts, expressly recognized by the Congress as a major concern, were factors that led to the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. In addition, the Council's guidelines for preparing statements refer to these impacts and provide for their analysis by Federal agencies.

In commenting on the draft statement, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR), Department of the Interior, expressed concern about the effect the transmission line would have on the population patterns and resource base of the area. Specifically, BOR wanted to know if the project would

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"result in a change in population either in terms of more people, or more people concentrated in certain areas \*\*\* " However, the final statement did not discuss any population changes which would occur as a result of the project.

BOR also commented that the final statement should discuss the social, economic, and environmental objectives which would have to be foregone if the transmission line was not installed. The final statement indicated some of the objectives, but only indirectly and generally. For example, it stated that the project would reduce economic losses to industry, agriculture, and business by making the area less vulnerable to power failures. In addition, the statement pointed out that the increased availability of electrical power would help industries which provide jobs. BOR's comments, for the most part, were not included in the final statement.

The Bureau of Reclamation did not circulate the draft statement for comment to HUD, an agency having expertise in social impacts of the type generated by this project. Bureau officials in Washington agreed that the final statement had not adequately considered the social impacts of the project and stated that this problem happened, in part, because the majority of their projects were in rural areas. However, they said that future statements would be circulated to such agencies as HUD to insure that all environmental impacts receive adequate review and consideration.

### HAMILTON-CLERMONT LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAY, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FHWA, Department of Transportation, has delegated the responsibility for preparing environmental impact statements to the State highway agencies. FHWA's role is to (1) establish policies and procedures for the States' use in preparing statements, (2) insure that the States follow all applicable policies and procedures, and (3) serve as a reviewing agency. FHWA regional offices are now responsible for review and acceptance of statements for FHWA actions. The Department of Transportation's Office of Environmental Quality must concur in FHWA approval before final environmental impact statements become official Department of Transportation statements.

We selected the statement for the Hamilton-Clermont Highway Route 50-29.63/0.00 for review. (This statement was processed under interim guidelines which placed the responsibility for its review and acceptance in the FHWA Administrator's Office.) The purpose of this proposed highway is to provide a limited-access highway--about 10 miles in length--to bypass the villages of Fairfax, Mariemont, Terrace Park, and Milford in Hamilton and Clermont Counties, Ohio. This proposed highway is to be located west of, and parallel to, the Little Miami River.

The Ohio Department of Highways prepared the draft statement and, on April 1, 1971, made it available to various Federal, State, and local agencies and to the public for comment.

After it received the comments, the Ohio Department of Highways prepared the final statement which was forwarded to, and approved by, FHWA division, regional, and Administrator offices on September 16, 1971. The FHWA Administrator's office forwarded copies of the statement to the Office of Environmental Quality. After meetings with citizen groups and FHWA staff, the Office of Environmental Quality advised FHWA on March 9, 1972, that the statement was not being approved and requested that FHWA and the Ohio Department of Highways further consider the alternatives to the proposed project.

The proposed final statement for the Hamilton-Clermont highway did not adequately explain or support the identified impacts. Comments on the draft statement were not obtained from two Federal agencies, even though some of the identified impacts were within their areas of expertise, and comments from other agencies were not dealt with in the proposed final statement.

#### Environmental impacts

The draft statement for the proposed highway lacked sufficient information about impacts of the highway on the environment and about alternatives to enable adequate reviews

The draft statement listed 14 impacts but, in most cases, the discussion was limited to short statements which did not fully disclose the impacts on the environment. An example was the statement that "there will be no appreciable effect on the wildlife and general ecology of the area." The draft statement did not contain any information or statistics on the number or types of wildlife in the area; the effects, good or bad, that the highway would have on wildlife, or an explanation of what was intended by the term "general ecology."

Another example was the statement that

"noise and air pollution incident to motor vehicles will be reduced in the communities and on the proposed facility since the vehicles will be operating in this most efficient range. No pollution of water will occur."

The draft statement did not explain how air pollution would be reduced in the communities or how noise and air pollution would be reduced in the area of the proposed highway, even though the addition of vehicles in the area is certain to increase the noise and air pollution. For example, the statement did not provide data on the quality of air in the area of the proposed highway, the extent of air pollution from existing sources in the area, or the projected increased pollution that would result from constructing the highway.

We also noted that the draft statement did not include as an impact the potential effects on the Little Miami River of salt (for snow and ice control) or oil and gasoline from the highway.

Federal agencies' reviewing officials told us that draft statements should contain information similar to that discussed above to enable an adequate review of the statements. They told us also that such information not only was lacking in the statement for the Hamilton-Clermont highway but also was lacking in other statements submitted for review by the Ohio Department of Highways and other State highway departments. These officials also said that technical terms should be set forth in common language so that

all reviewing agencies would fully understand what is being discussed or that the statements should include a glossary of such terms.

The Chief of the Environmental Development Division, FHWA, disagreed generally that there is a need for statements to contain detailed, quantitative information on cited impacts. He told us that the purpose of draft statements was not to contain all the data considered in making judgments regarding specific impacts and that short statements on impacts are adequate as long as they include the bases for the statements.

Officials of the Office of Environmental Quality agreed with the views of the Federal agencies' reviewing officials that a more detailed discussion of the identified environmental impacts would have been appropriate for inclusion in the statement for the Hamilton-Clermont highway and perhaps in others. They pointed out that full consideration of environmental impacts necessarily requires technical discussion and that an attempt to cover these points in common language could result in oversimplification and in inaccurate evaluations. They agreed, however, that a glossary of terms might be helpful to the reviewing agencies.

#### Support for impacts

Of the 14 impacts identified in the statement, 12 were not supported by studies or quantitative data.

An official of the Ohio Department of Highways, who prepared the draft statement, told us that the identified impacts were based on his opinions and experiences as a highway engineer and on a location document prepared by the consulting firm that made the proposed route location study for the department. The official of the consulting firm who prepared the location document told us that the majority of the statements of fact contained in that document were based on his opinions and experiences as an engineer.

An example of an identified impact not supported by any documentation was the statement:

"The area suitable for recreation and/or a green belt strip along the Little Miami River will be



enhanced, the proposed alignment's ability to shield the existing open pit mining of gravel and the potential industrial development of the area "

BOR, in commenting on the draft statement, objected to the statement that the area would be enhanced by constructing the highway. The Bureau said

"\*\*\* we feel that the environmental impact statement tends to minimize the negative impact that the freeway will have on the river. The statement holds that a four to six lane freeway could in a sense protect the natural values of the river by acting as a barrier to industrial encroachment on the river. This may be true in areas where a wide green belt would be established between the river and the highway. However, in those areas where the freeway is in close proximity to the river the cure seems as bad as or worse than the disease. To the river user the noise, sight, and smell of a freeway would be as obnoxious as most industry, and more obnoxious than adjacent gravel pit operations "

Another example of an unsupported impact was the statement that no natural or historic landmarks would be encountered in constructing the highway. The Ohio Historical Society commented that the highway may have an adverse effect on one historic and several prehistoric landmarks. The society furnished the Ohio Department of Highways with a list of eight documented prehistoric landmarks in the immediate vicinity or on the proposed right-of-way. The society also pointed out that several undocumented, but soon-to-be-surveyed, Indian campsites were located immediately within and adjacent to the proposed highway. An assistant professor of anthropology at an Ohio university testified at the highway location hearing that four prehistoric sites would be destroyed if the highway was constructed at the proposed location. The draft statement made no reference to the fact that prehistoric sites existed in the project area.

In our opinion including potential environmental impacts of proposed actions that are not adequately discussed and supported in draft statements does not provide for an

effective evaluation of the proposed actions by Federal, State, and local agencies or by the public.

Officials of the Office of Environmental Quality agreed that impacts of proposed actions identified in draft statements should be fully disclosed and documented. They stated that the Department of Transportation's procedures make it clear that the responsibility for doing this lies with the office originating the environmental impact statement--in this case the Ohio Department of Highways in conjunction with the FHWA Division Engineer. They stated also that they have attempted to make it clear, both in the Department's procedures and in a series of environmental conferences held throughout the country, that a systematic, interdisciplinary approach, as required by the act, should be used by the originating office in its basic studies of proposed projects and in the preparation of the statements.

#### Coordination with other agencies

The draft statement for the proposed highway was not circulated to HUD or EPA for their review and comment, even though it included impacts which are in these agencies' areas of expertise.

An official of the Ohio Department of Highways told us that, when the environmental impact process was first started, HUD and EPA were not included on the Department's distribution list for draft statements. The official could not give us any reason for this omission but assured us that these agencies now receive copies of all draft statements for review and comment.

The most significant comments of the reviewing agencies that were not dealt with in the proposed final statement were those received from BOR and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and from the public at hearings on the effects that air, noise, and water pollution would have on the Little Miami River and the adjoining area.

BOR, in addition to making the comments on page 29, recommended that (1) additional land be purchased for green belt purposes and (2) special landscaping be provided to retain the natural characteristics of the bank of the Little

Miami River and to screen the highway. Officials of BOR told us that they were dissatisfied with the disposition of their comments; they said that Ohio's response to their comments and recommendations was so general that the Ohio Department of Highways was not obligated to take any action. They stated that they would have liked to have had the Ohio Department of Highways agree to make a joint study with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to determine the best measures for screening the freeway from the river and for developing the river for recreational uses. They also expressed concern that their comments on potential water pollution--even though that is not in their area of expertise--were not adequately discussed in the final statement.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife stated that the measures indicated for controlling siltation were inadequate because erosion and siltation standards to be included in the construction contract had not been provided and because no explanation was included as to how such standards would be enforced during construction.

The only reference in the proposed final statement to the comments by the two Bureaus regarding pollution of the river or the adjacent area was as follows:

"Another objection raised was that during the construction of the highway there would be large amounts of erosion and sedimentation."

The proposed final statement disposed of this objection by stating that it was discussed previously in answer to comments received from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Officials of commenting agencies told us that in most instances they did not get an opportunity to see how their comments were treated in the final statements. They said that the process would be more meaningful if they were provided with copies of final statements on which they had commented. Officials of the Ohio Department of Highways told us that they plan to send copies of final statements to all agencies which commented on the draft statements.

ELK MOUNTAIN ROAD, SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST,  
FOREST SERVICE

We selected for review the Forest Service's environmental impact statement for the Elk Mountain Road--a 34-mile, double-lane road--in the Santa Fe National Forest. The construction of this road will complete the scenic roadway known as the Rio Pecos Forest Drive which was initiated in 1963 and which was partly completed by 1967. At that time the completion of the drive was halted because of the scarcity of funds.

Because of local interest in the potential economic benefits from constructing the Elk Mountain Road, the Economic Development Agency in October 1970 offered a grant of 80 percent of the estimated cost of \$4.7 million and the New Mexico State Highway Department offered a commitment of 20 percent of the estimated costs.

The Forest Service's region 3 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, prepared the draft statement dated February 9, 1971, and the final statement dated June 17, 1971, which was filed with the Council on June 25, 1971.

The legality of the Economic Development Agency's granting of funds for the road prior to preparing a statement has been contested by a group of citizens who are opposed to the construction of the road on the basis that it could destroy the wilderness character of the area and the adjacent Pecos Wilderness.

The District Court of the United States for the District of New Mexico and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, Denver, Colorado, ruled in favor of the Government; stated that the Forest Service is responsible for preparing the statement; and noted that, although the grant by the Economic Development Agency would permit accelerating the construction of the road, it was not entirely dependent on such funding. Forest Service officials advised us that the court rulings had been appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States which had agreed to hear the appeal.

The final statement for the Elk Mountain Road did not adequately discuss or support the listed adverse environmental impacts that constructing the road would have on air, natural beauty, timber, range, wilderness, and wildlife.

In discussing adverse environmental effects on fish and wildlife, for example, the statement said:

"Construction of this road will have some effect on wildlife. The improved access will attract more hunters to the area, thus increasing hunting pressure. The fencing of portions of the roadway could affect established game routes and herd movements \*\*\*. Developing the proposed road will increase the possibility of harassment to wildlife species." (Underscoring supplied.)

Concerning wilderness, the statement said:

"The Elk Mountain Road will give better access to the southeast portion of the [Pecos] Wilderness which is now only lightly used. This will help disperse use in the Wilderness but, at the same time, the increased pressures may have some adverse effect on the Wilderness. Increase in use of over-snow vehicles in the vicinity of Elk Mountain and Rosilla Ridge would necessitate applying administrative control to prevent users from taking the vehicles into the Wilderness." (Underscoring supplied.)

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, in commenting on the draft statement, pointed out that it lacked sufficient details of the impacts that constructing the road would have on fish, wildlife, and wilderness and suggested that the statement include specific proposals for replacing or developing wildlife resources which would be lost if the road is built. These agencies also expressed concern about the environmental impact of the proposed recreation sites to be built in conjunction with the road. Both agencies suggested also that, since the draft statement lacked a detailed analysis of the impact on fish and wildlife, mitigation features,

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and development controls, the Forest Service should select another location for the road from those listed as alternatives in the statement that would have a less detrimental impact on the area's wildlife resources.

The Forest Service, in responding to these requests for specific data, stated that the impact on fish and wildlife resulting from the proposed road and additional recreational developments would be evaluated at a later date and that at that time specific recommendations for mitigation measures or enhancement opportunities would be determined. The Forest Service did not mention development controls other than that it is currently evaluating goals and techniques for managing recreation areas. Officials of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish told us that they were dissatisfied with the Forest Service's responses to their comments on the draft statement. They stated that the fish and wildlife studies should have been completed before the final statement was prepared.

### Support for impacts

The statement was based on a Forest Service Multiple Use Survey and Report prepared in November 1970. Since interest in constructing the road goes back to the early 1960s, voluminous data on the road was accumulated before the statement was prepared. Most of this data did not address itself to specific environmental impacts, which necessitated updating the studies and making additional studies prior to the preparation of the statement.

Some of the data supporting the road construction was provided by other agencies. Economic data was developed by the staffs of the Santa Fe National Forest, the North Central New Mexico Economic Development District, and the New Mexico Highlands University. A projection of this data showed that a major economic benefit from constructing the road would be a long-term increase of 756 jobs. Officials of the Economic Development Agency told us that the anticipated long-term employment was the basis for their funding. This economic data was obtained by requesting 186 businesses in the area to estimate how much their business and

employment would increase as a result of opening up the national forest for recreation and winter sports by constructing the road. The questionnaire used to obtain the data was worded in a manner that elicited favorable response

Of the 186 requests, only 71 responded. The estimates were expanded by the sponsors to include all 186 businesses. In our opinion, the projection of the responses to indicate the benefits that would be realized by all of the 186 businesses was improper because of the large percentage of non-responses.

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THE NEW COMMUNITY OF RIVERION, HUD

The Urban Growth and New Community Development Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 4511, et seq.) authorizes the Secretary of HUD to assist private and public developers of new communities through the New Communities Development Program. This program consists primarily of the Federal Government's guaranteeing obligations and making grants and loans to developers to (1) contribute to a better environment, (2) provide improved living conditions, (3) increase the housing supply, including that for persons of low or moderate incomes, (4) promote sound economic growth, including employment, and (5) generally provide a viable alternative to disorderly urban growth. HUD provided guarantees for loans of about \$104 million in fiscal year 1971 and \$116 million in fiscal year 1972.

We selected for review the statement for the proposed new community of Riverton, about 10 miles south of Rochester, New York. The project as designed comprises an area of 2,335 acres and provides for a population by 1989 of 25,600 living in 8,010 dwelling units.

HUD issued the draft statement for Riverton on July 27, 1971, and the final statement on November 19, 1971. On May 2, 1972, the developer signed the project agreement which outlined the detailed plans for constructing Riverton.

The draft statement for the proposed community did not (1) contain sufficient information to permit reviewing officials to evaluate environmental impacts and the adequacy of access roads to, and transportation services within, Riverton, (2) discuss the impact of the proposed new community on Scottsville, New York, or (3) discuss constructing the proposed community at another location. HUD did not adequately assess adverse environmental impacts of the proposed community or what measures could be taken to minimize these impacts. In addition, HUD had not completed the final statement at the time it decided to offer a loan guarantee commitment to the developer of the proposed community.



Environmental impacts

Reviewing officials of Federal and State agencies stated that the draft statement did not contain sufficient information about (1) the adequacy of transportation services in the proposed community, (2) certain characteristics and natural features on the site of the proposed community which may be worth preserving, (3) the impact of the proposed community on Scottsville, and (4) the alternative of not constructing the proposed community at the designated location.

The final statement contained no further information on the weaknesses cited by the agencies.

We believe that, of the environmental impacts identified in the statement, 18 were not adequately discussed in the statement. Some of these are discussed below.

1. Access and internal transportation--The statement said that major access from Rochester to Riverton is via West Henrietta Road and East River Road. The statement did not discuss the current volume of traffic on existing roads or whether the roads would require upgrading to handle the increased traffic resulting from constructing Riverton. Our review showed that many of these existing roads were already subject to heavy traffic and that the development of Riverton would further increase traffic problems on these roads, especially in the northern section of the site in the area of East River, Erie Station, and West Henrietta Roads.

In evaluating the developer's application for loan guarantee assistance, HUD's engineering consultant stated that, by:

"\*\*\* combining the traffic produced by the industrial sites and the shopping center, during rush hours, a theoretical total of about 5,000 vehicles could be attempting to travel on East River Road. Being a two-lane highway, with a capacity of about 2,000 vehicles per hour, it could take this road 2 1/2 hours to distribute this traffic."

In addition, the consultant stated that the roads in the Riverton area are essentially rural and are not designed to

carry traffic of suburban or urban density and concluded that the roads in the area would probably require upgrading.

The Department of Transportation noted problems concerning the adequacy of Riverton's internal transportation services as presented in the draft statement. The Department was interested especially in the availability of transportation services for low- and moderate-income families.

HUD, in its comments, recognized that transportation for these income groups could be a problem but indicated that the proposed land-use plan for Riverton would limit the need for automobile transportation. HUD stated that access to areas beyond the community would depend on a proposed rapid transit system and on the introduction of extended bus service from Rochester. As of April 24, 1972, the problem of transportation for low- and moderate-income families had not been solved.

2. Project size--The statement noted that "the planning area of the proposed new community comprises 2,350 acres \*\*\*." The studies for the project, however, were based on a project size of only 1,510 acres. The additional acreage for the proposed community is located in the northern and eastern sections of the site and is to be used primarily for commercial, residential, and industrial purposes. We could find no evidence that the environmental effects of developing the additional acreage had ever been studied.

3. Alternatives to the proposed action--Upon reviewing the disclosure of impacts in the section of the statement on alternatives to the proposed action, the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board stated:

"In considering alternatives in any environmental question it is always germane to ask: should this project ever be built in this particular place at all? This alternative was not considered in the HUD statement. It is the question that goes to the fundamental issue in the state's new town policy. By allowing developers to put together their own parcels [sic] of land for a new community, are the best sites for such communities being chosen, both from the physical and social environmental

standpoints? Is it too late in the process to ask for an environmental impact statement on a new community proposal when a site has already been selected and plans for development advanced?"

Our review of this section of the statement showed that the only alternatives considered were (1) the gradual development of the land during the next 15 to 20 years by increased single-family residential construction and (2) the possibility of using a portion of the site along the Genesee River as a park. Alternative locations for the project were not discussed in either the draft or the final environmental impact statement.

4. Sanitary sewage--The statement pointed out that Riverton would be serviced by the local sewer district. However, the statement did not mention whether the existing facilities have adequate capacity for handling the increased sewage that would result from Riverton or whether additional facilities would have to be built.

The Department of the Interior recognized this problem in its comments on the statement and noted that the statement did not disclose whether existing sanitary sewage facilities were adequate to serve the new community. The Department also stated that, in the event these facilities became inadequate to serve the projected population, alternative treatment facilities would be needed.

The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board stated that existing sanitary facilities available to Riverton are a 27-inch sewer connected with the Gates-Chili-Ogden treatment plant and the Scottsville sewage treatment plant, that the 27-inch sewer "does have some minor excess capacity over the next few years to receive sewage from Riverton," and that "the Scottsville treatment plant is designed with minimum capacity anticipated to serve the Village and selected areas in the town of Wheatland \*\*\*." The board concluded that it would be necessary to revise its plans and construction schedules for sewage facilities to provide adequate capacity for Riverton.

EPA expressed concern that the joint drinking-water intake for Rochester and Monroe County is located only

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3-1/2 miles from the point where the Gates-Chili-Ogden sewage treatment plant discharges into Lake Ontario and stated that HUD should make certain that the sewage treatment plant has adequate capacity

Although Federal and State agencies expressed concern over the adequacy of existing sanitary sewage facilities to handle the wastes from Riverton, the final statement did not deal with the agencies' comments on the adequacy of existing sewage facilities or the improvements that would be needed in these facilities to handle the wastes from Riverton.

Moreover, although the draft statement identified many potential environmental impacts, it did not provide sufficient disclosure of these impacts to enable the reviewing agencies or the public to adequately comment on them.

### Support for impacts

Although the final statement identified adverse environmental impacts resulting from the construction of Riverton, we found no evidence that the developer or HUD had made any studies to determine the extent of these impacts. We believe that HUD, in addition to disclosing these effects in the statement, should have assessed their degree of adversity and discussed possible means to minimize them. In addition, the studies submitted by the developer did not adequately support some of the disclosures made in the statement. For example, the statement discussed the fact that paving in the area of Riverton would prevent water from soaking into the ground and would increase the flow of water into the Genesee River. The statement also noted that grading, site preparation, and excavation would cause siltation in the river and that the developer proposed to construct three lakes at Riverton which, in addition to having recreation and aesthetic values, would serve as water impoundment areas and would thereby control, to a degree, surface runoff and siltation. However, we found no evidence that the developer or HUD had made any studies to determine the anticipated amount of increase in runoff and siltation, the effect on the quality of water in the Genesee River, or the compatibility of using the lakes to control runoff and siltation with the other values associated with their construction.

The statement also noted that the number of automobiles would increase, which would increase automotive emissions. However, the statement did not set forth in detail the impacts of this increased traffic on the project area.

#### Coordination with other agencies

The most significant of the agencies' comments on the draft statement pertained to the effects of the proposed community of Riverton on the existing community of Scottsville, wildlife, solid waste, and the increase in the number of automobiles. Some of these effects are discussed below.

The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board stated that.

"\*\* the environmental impact statement does not discuss the impact of the proposed new community on the life and environment of the village of Scottsville, one of the oldest, most stable communities in Monroe County.

"Experience with new towns in Britain, many of them 'grafted' onto old village communities, resulted in serious social friction. The old residents resented the new community and the increasing social, transportation and recreation problems they brought with them."

HUD's consultant for evaluating the developer's application for guarantee assistance also recognized the effect that Riverton would have on Scottsville. The consultant stated that:

"The area which may be most severely affected is the nearby Village of Scottsville \*\*. It is important that Riverton complement and not overwhelm Scottsville. Unless careful control of land use and development design is exercised, the resources of Scottsville may be overpowered and its identity and prospects for self renewal worsened."

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Although the Riverton project will obviously affect Scottsville, the effects were not discussed in either the draft or the final statement.

The draft statement noted that all animal habitats in the flood plain area had been eliminated because the land was being used for cultivation. The Department of the Interior, however, took exception to this statement and pointed out that cultivation had changed only the original habitat and species composition and that the State Division of Fish and Wildlife considers the area to be a prime ring-neck pheasant habitat providing excellent hunting opportunities to the residents of Rochester and surrounding communities. Interior also stated that deer and fox squirrels inhabit the project area and that the fishing resources of the area should be discussed in the final statement. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation made similar comments. However, neither of the agencies' comments were dealt with in the final statement.

Statement not available at time  
decision made to offer a commitment

HUD did not complete the statement before deciding to offer a loan guarantee commitment to the developer.

HUD's procedures pertaining to such offers of commitment are as follows:

HUD offices review a developer's application for guarantee assistance for the development of a new community and submit a report on their findings and recommendations to the board of directors of the Community Development Corporation. The board, on the basis of its review of the application and the report, decides whether or not an offer of commitment should be made. When the board decides that an offer should be made, HUD issues a letter of commitment to the developer providing for the guarantee of a specified amount and for its acceptance within 120 days. If the guarantee is accepted, HUD enters into a project agreement with the developer, setting forth the commitment, understandings, and conditions pertaining to the entire project.

On November 30, 1970, the developer of the proposed new community submitted an application to HUD for guarantee assistance. The board of directors of the Community Development Corporation met on July 30, 1971, 3 days after the draft statement was released for comment, and decided that an offer of commitment should be made to the developer. Although the actual offer of commitment was not made until December 20, 1971, 30 days after the final statement was filed with the Council, we believe that the board of directors should have had the benefit of the final statement before it made its decision to make an offer of a loan guarantee to the developer.

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JAMES V. STANTON, OHIO	

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on**  
**Merchant Marine and Fisheries**  
 Room 1334, Longworth House Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20515

RALPH I. CASEY  
CHIEF COUNSELNED P. FURCHETT  
COUNSELERNEST J. CORRADO  
COUNSELRICHARD N. SHAROUH  
MINORITY COUNSEL

May 18, 1971

ROBERT J. MCELROY CHIEF CLERK

Honorable Elmer B. Staats  
 Comptroller General of the United States  
 General Accounting Office  
 441 G Street, N. W.  
 Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Staats:

Section 102 (2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) requires all agencies of the Federal Government to include in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, a detailed statement on:

1. the environmental impact of the proposed action,
2. any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented,
3. alternatives to the proposed action,
4. the relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and
5. any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action.

We would like your office to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the Section 102 requirement for submission of environmental impact statements as administered by about four or five departments or agencies. The



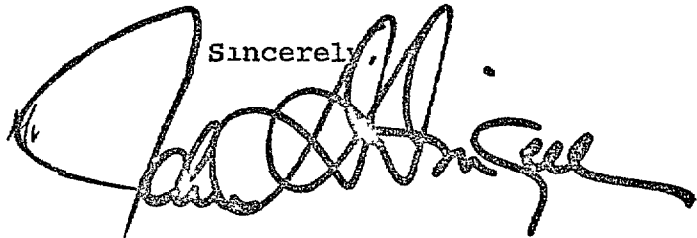
review should compare procedures and practices of the several agencies to ascertain whether Section 102 is being implemented uniformly and systematically, in accordance with applicable legislation.

Consideration should also be given to such matters as (1) the agencies' views on actions not requiring impact statements, (2) the coordination between State and Federal agencies in reviewing and commenting on impact statements, (3) the use made of impact statements as a decision making tool, (4) the adequacy of selected impact statements, (5) the role of the Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Management and Budget, and (6) the adequacy of the agencies' procedures as a means of developing effective public participation in making agency decisions with environmental implications.

As discussed by my Subcommittee's staff members with your representatives, the Congressional Research Service has agreed to provide the occasional services of staff personnel from a variety of disciplines to assist the GAO in its evaluation of selected environmental impact statements. Also a principal researcher and an assistant of the Environmental Policy Division of CRS will be available to assist GAO by such means as participating in interviews with agency officials and providing information for the development of the report. I understand that the details of this collaboration will be determined at subsequent meetings.

Please do not hesitate to call on my staff if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

John D. Dingell, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Fisheries  
and Wildlife Conservation

## PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS

RESPONSIBLE FOR  
ADMINISTRATION OF ACTIVITIES

BEST DOCUMENT AVAILABLE

DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

	<u>Tenure of office</u>	
	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
<u>DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</u>		
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE:		
Earl L. Butz	Dec. 1971	Present
Clifford M Hardin	Jan. 1969	Nov. 1971
CHIEF, FOREST SERVICE:		
Edward P. Cliff	Mar. 1962	Present
ADMINISTRATOR, SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE:		
Kenneth E. Grant	Jan. 1969	Present
<u>DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE</u>		
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:		
Melvin R. Laird	Jan. 1969	Present
<u>DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY</u>		
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:		
Robert F. Froehlke	July 1971	Present
Stanley R. Resor	July 1965	June 1971
CHIEF OF ENGINEERS:		
Lt. Gen. Frederick J. Clarke	Aug. 1969	Present

## APPENDIX II

<u>Tenure of office</u>	
<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENTSECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT:

George Romney	Jan. 1969	Present
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR:

Rogers C. B. Morton	Jan. 1971	Present
Fred J. Russell (acting)	Nov. 1970	Jan. 1971
Walter J. Hickel	Jan. 1969	Nov. 1970

## COMMISSIONER OF RECLAMATION:

Ellis L. Armstrong	Nov. 1969	Present
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION:

John A. Volpe	Jan. 1969	Present
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ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL HIGHWAY  
ADMINISTRATION.

Francis C. Turner	Mar. 1969	Present
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