

# "Environment vs. Economy: Exploding a Phony Issue," Izaak Walton League Annual Meeting, Des Moines, Iowa, July 11, 1975

**NOTE: The following text has been edited from the original notes used for this speech; some handwritten notations have been enclosed in brackets for clarity.**

It's a great privilege to appear before the Izaak Walton League of America, an organization I have long admired. I have worked with many of your leaders, both in Washington and in the states and communities. I commend you for the long fight you have waged in the upper Mississippi Valley, and particularly for your present effort to nix the needless-rebuilding of Lock and Dam 26. I am also especially impressed by your Bicentennial program to teach local citizens how to clean up and maintain their streams. This is the environmental movement at its best.

I know from my own experience in Arizona what it means to have a group of smart, dedicated people take hold of a local issue, to put aside partisanship and get the job done.

Some of you may have heard the report that I'm running for President. It is true. [insert Barber Shop story] And one of the main reasons I'm running is that the environmental issues are no longer a side show of our political life. I've been talking all over this country about the three E's -- energy, environment and economy. They are inextricably intertwined, and decisions about them will determine the quality of our lives in the decades ahead.

It is a lamentable fact that the environmental issues I'm talking about today were not really debated in 1968 or 1972. The fate of my campaign isn't all that important -- what is important is that this time we make very sure that there is a debate on this whole range of quality-of- life problems and that it be a central part of the 1976 campaign. [Too Important.]

For conservation remains a major national issue. Fifteen months ago [Denver -- Valley Forge] I got a good deal of criticism from some of my colleagues in the environmental movement when I observed that we had been put on the defensive, and that we stood in danger of losing much of what we had achieved.

Last November we thought we had elected a basically environmentally-aware congress. But, important as this election was, in a sense, it wasn't really a victory for our Conservation troops. The environment wasn't a major issue in most congressional districts. Fact that more votes for [word indistinct] ... the coattails of Richard Nixon and Herbert Hoover -- of scandal and recession. We benefited from the negatives. But the pressures for retreat on environmental positions have not abated; they have grown. That is the bad news.

The good news is that major conservation groups like yours continue to grow and to hold your own financially. But we have not yet fully translated our advance into public perception. Indeed we are still painted by the Administration and by the reactionary segments of industry as barefoot elitists insensitive to the material needs of our fellow citizens.

So we have some tough challenges before us -- tougher in many ways than the "Valley Forge" situation I described last year. Here are the challenges that lie ahead.

- We must resist pressures to halt our goal of clean air and water.
- We must continue the battle for reasonable curbs on energy resource development, for meaningful conservation of energy, and for sound forward-looking land use planning.
- We must show by hard facts and figures the American people that conservation means more and not fewer jobs.
- We must build bridges to labor and people in poverty, and to our minorities, and convince them that in the long run the environmental issues -- energy conservation, wise resource use and re-use -- are not just a road, the only road to more jobs and a healthy economy.
- And we must challenge at every step the Administration that pays lip service to environmental goals while systematically blocking every effort for substantive progress.

Let me elaborate on these five critical tasks.

**First, clean air.** Since these programs were enacted we have seen repeated attempts by the electric power industry, some local jurisdictions, and the automobile industry to weaken standards and extend deadlines. Most have been resisted, but the Ford Administration again is pushing to extend the 1977 deadline on auto emissions, already pushed back from 1975, to 1981. If we allow that to happen, we might as well give up the fight, because we all know the Big Three will be back in four or five years to push through yet another extension, with plenty of precedent to back them up.

Industry and the Administration would have us believe that there really isn't much at stake here -- just some minor aesthetic considerations that must be sacrificed in the name of economy. Where is the economy in 4 million illness-restricted days caused by automotive pollution each year? Are the deaths of 4,000 people each year, deaths caused by automobile air pollution, a minor aesthetic consideration.

[Still, there are some who would have us believe that clean air, clean water and environmental monitoring are radical proposals that undermine the free enterprise system.]

Happily, many conservatives reject this counsel, joining with liberals and those in between to form a strong, continuing national consensus behind programs for clean air, clean water, pesticide control and solid waste disposal. Against the concerted efforts of the current Administration, we must battle to maintain and expand this coalition.

The events of the past two years have driven home the fact that our 30-year joyride, fueled by cheap and plentiful energy resources, has come to an abrupt halt. We need and will develop additional sources and new technologies, but we must resist the dangers of the reckless dam-dig-and-drill philosophy being voiced today. We should recall the words of the political economist Stuart Chase, who wrote 40 years ago:

"Natural resources and inanimate energy were left by God or by geology to mankind, and not to the Standard Oil Company of California. If this is not sound moral doctrine, I do not know what is."

If we could achieve nothing else, our most urgent priority is a strong but sensible energy conservation policy. Democrats as well as Republicans must be faulted for the failure of Congress and the Executive to see the truth and act. The President has proposed, in effect, rationing by wealth. The Congress has splintered ineffectually on a hard problem 535 representatives and senators have, on the whole, failed to face. What will be required, in my opinion, are a whole set of new attitudes and a strong dose of structural change in our monopolistic energy business.

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One of my deepest beliefs is that we must challenge the conventional wisdom that holds that slowing energy growth means slowing economic growth. [What Ford said at (word indistinct)] To the contrary, economists at the University of Illinois have demonstrated that investment in energy production produces fewer jobs than almost any other sector of the economy. It costs \$22,000 to create a permanent job in general manufacturing. The investment needed for a job in oil is \$125,000; in the utilities it's \$175,000; and on the Alaska Pipeline it is upwards of \$250,000.

Indeed, continuing the kind of energy expansion we have seen in the past would not be good news. A 5% energy growth rate -- the kind we've had for 30 years -- means that we have to **double** our power production every 14 years. It means accelerating the drain on our economy paying extortionate prices to unreliable foreign producers. It means turning Colorado, Montana, Arizona and Utah into wall-to-wall power plants. And it means a capital investment of **\$600 billion** in the next decade. Try to imagine what that means for [inflation] businessmen and homebuyers trying to compete in the lending markets -- what kind of prosperity will it buy?

Now think about a 2 % energy growth rate -- a goal we could achieve without losing a single job, without relaxing a single environmental standard, simply by squeezing out unnecessary driving in oversized cars, by putting better insulation into our homes and offices, by stopping thoughtless waste in our factories. It means that we have 35 years -- another full generation -- before we have to double energy production capacity. It buys us time to free ourselves from OPEC's blackmail. It buys time to answer rationally the grave questions in nuclear power, to improve conventional generating technology, and to harness the power of sun and earth and wind and tides. It means, too, that we will have the capital to put into the other great needs of our society, like housing, mass transit and better schools.

Even with such an effort, much of our future energy will come from coal, like it or not. And I think all of you here are probably aware of the fight my colleagues and I have been waging to make strip miners responsible for restoring the surface of lands they disrupt. We simply have no right to pass on this scarred, ruined land to our grandchildren and call it their birthright. [Today 1,000 acres, No bill]

Gerald Ford, Frank Zarb and the most reactionary segment of Congress have blocked us temporarily, but we will win. Zarb and Co. are supported by phony statistics and an unelected President; on our side are common sense and the vast majority of the American people. We **will** have a good, workable strip mining bill, we **will** enact it into law, and it **will** increase coal production and employment if not in this Administration, then in the next. [Do it right, 1000 Yeas, Doesn't respect]

An energy conservation program will give us time to make some reasoned and fateful decision on nuclear energy as well. There are compelling arguments on both sides -- arguments my Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment is proceeding to weigh in our "National Nuclear Debate" hearings -- but it would be foolish, perhaps fatal, to proceed hastily with the next generation of nuclear plants before we answer tough questions with a degree of certainty. The same holds true of offshore oil and deepwater port development, issues I'm studying as a member of a new House Ad Hoc Committee, and it's also true of oil shale. We in the conservation movement have a duty to marshal the facts fairly and reasonably, to convince the nation of the need to bring our energy demands under control while we give these fateful issues the consideration they require.

One field where we can and should move forward now is harnessing the power of the sun. There is a popular myth that holds solar energy to be impractical, too expensive, or in the realm of future technology. The National Science Foundation has dispelled that myth. It found that, using present technology, we could install solar heating units in the nation's homes and reduce the national energy budget by 12 to 15 per cent. And the cost could be recovered in fuel savings in 10 to 12 years.

Don't let anyone tell you that being for the environment means you have to be against progress.

Closely tied with energy conservation and development of energy resources is land use planning. Two years ago Richard Nixon called it his top environmental goal. Today the Administration refuses to support it. But in the next week I think we will win a showdown vote to get my land use bill out of committee and onto the House floor -- where with your help I predict passage by a substantial margin. [LUP goes on. Sitting Bill, EPA, Hwy Subsidies] [Whether we win or lose -- Gert Stein -- What is the question]

We are no longer a frontier nation, and the land is not a commodity any more. It is a resource -- the most fundamental resource of all. Every year we lose two million acres of our best agricultural land to often sprawling, energy-wasting urban uses. Millions of additional acres are threatened by strip mining and speculation by land syndicators with the morals of river boat gamblers. Once lost, they may be gone forever. We can build the housing and commercial developments we need without committing this crime against a hungry world. The many enlightened developers who support our bill realize this. But we who believe in conservation must battle a hysterical campaign by the extreme right, in league with the unscrupulous speculators who have bilked tens of thousands of our people.

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Bringing the facts into the light, and convincing the American public of the only really sound energy course, will not be easy. We will be blocked -- we are today being blocked -- by those who would profit in the short run from slowing down the environmental movement. I'm speaking of those in industry and in politics who have posed this phony choice for the nation between jobs and environmental quality.

You have been placed [NY Times -- Cincinnati] as a scapegoat by those who don't want to be blamed for rising unemployment. Because people don't have the facts there is a real anger that this sort of tactic will work.

A big debate is going on over jobs versus the environment. Someone needs to define the problem. Perhaps the President's own council on environmental quality can help. [Russell Peterson]

CEQ reported three months ago that its studies indicate that the net impact of environmental programs on employment is not a drag, a barrier, an impediment to the creation of jobs for people. On the contrary, the net impact is jobs are added not subtracted. Because of these environmental programs there are more people at work today than would be employed if we didn't have them.

CEQ says that while pollution controls have been a factor in the closing of a number of old, obsolete plants, there is no evidence that these plant closings have been significant in terms of total employment, or that pollution control regulations have been a prime cause. In the 69 plants closed between 1971 and the end of 1974, presumably in part because of environmental regulations there was a total of approximately 12,000 jobs involved, some of which simply moved to other plants in the same companies. In most cases the plants were old, small, only marginally profitable and headed for closing anyway. [Plants always closing somewhere]

In contrast to these jobs losses, America has created more than a million new jobs in its efforts to protect the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency says this total may double in the next year -- and we've made less than 10 per cent of the needed investment in pollution control. There are literally millions more jobs waiting -- and they depend on this movement going forward, not backward. Let me cite some examples:

There are 150,000 people at work running facilities built under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1970 -- people who can thank the Izaak Walton League, among others, for their paychecks. Another 20,000 are manufacturing the equipment, and last year 55,000 construction workers labored to build waste-water plants. And this year, 300,000 more people can be put to work under this program.

In solid waste control and resource recovery there are nearly 100,000 people at work. Under the Clean Air Act, there are 5,400 working to manufacture and operate controls -- and that number will increase 12-fold by next year if federal standards are maintained. In pesticide, noise and pure water control there are now 73,000 at work because of our environmental efforts, and that will rise to 95,000 by EPA estimates.

These are jobs for every kind of worker: not just for the highly trained research scientists, but for factory workers and construction workers to build the facilities, for technicians to run them, and for the whole supporting cast needed to run any enterprise of this magnitude.

And this could be only the beginning. Think about meeting low and moderate income housing goals is one way we can help ourselves. Compared to virtually any other industrialized nation our record is shameful, as a trip through any urban slum will tell you. The new housing law passed by the Congress this summer is a start toward this end, but much more needs to be done. The important point is that this kind of program helps in two ways -- first, improving our urban environment through meeting real human needs, and second, creating jobs that will help our entire economy.

Let me suggest still another positive course we can follow that will help create jobs while simultaneously removing a whole array of local environmental conflicts. I'm speaking of the

advantage we would gain by shifting some funds now earmarked for highways to mass transit. The benefits are at least three in number:

1. Mass transit can improve life in the cities by getting auto traffic off the streets.
2. Many of the remaining highway projects now on the drawing boards need thorough review before they go forward. The thinking that went into them may now be 20 years out of date.
3. In terms of energy as well as jobs there are advantages on the side of mass transit. One study indicates a shift of \$5 billion from highways to railroad and mass transit construction would mean a 61 per cent saving in energy and a 3 per cent gain in the number of people employed. Have it both ways?

To sum up, environmentalists certainly recognize that the unemployment problem is serious and demands attention. But we know -- and should shout it out -- that there is no basis whatsoever for the contention that the environment is to blame for it or that the time has come to gut our environmental laws in the name of employment.

I want to reiterate one of the things I said in that speech 15 months ago:

"Part of the reason the environmental movement finds itself in trouble today is that we failed during the heady years of the 60s to make friends and forge alliances with groups that might be largely with us now: blue collar America, enlightened industry, the minorities who inhabit our rundown cities. "

The economic crisis has redoubled this problem. We still have not broken down these barriers of distrust, still fairly elitist, but the potential remains. We must make the most of the job-creating potential I have already described.

We must also demonstrate that we have learned -- that we understand that the many problems of cities are at heart environmental problems.

As environmentalists, we have answers to urban problems. Recycling, a cottage industry today, offers a tremendous potential: by burning the paper and plastic we now throw away, we could produce three to four per cent of the nation's energy budget. It doesn't sound like much, until you realize that it is **twice** the power needed for all residential and commercial lighting in the United States.

The metals left over amount to \$5 billion a year -- nearly the amount of emergency aid being sought by the nation's mayors today. These are answers -- environmentalist answers -- that can save land, produce jobs and meet city budgets without ruinous tax increases.

And we should join the coalition supporting far-reaching, visionary approaches to solving the boom-and-bust cycle that makes human suffering -- the material deprivation and psychic devastation of massive unemployment -- the price of stability. There is in Congress today legislation to implement a **real** full employment policy -- one that guarantees jobs in the public interest for every American willing and able to work. Full employment, clean streets.

This is the straightest, surest path to restored prosperity. It is a human conservation measure, and it promises to be a landmark environmental conservation program as well. It will hold country

together and put hundreds of thousands of our people to work restoring and preserving our countryside and cities -- restoring stripped hillsides, poisoned waters, dilapidated railroads, devastated communities and ruined croplands. It is not make work but needed work, jobs our consumer- oriented private sector cannot or will not provide. It is the kind of program that can reunite us with our natural allies, the working people and the poor who have suffered from the "full unemployment" policies of the past half-dozen years.

But I don't think we can make major progress on any of the tasks I've outlined without a change in thinking at the top -- make it sensitive to the needs of our people and our land or change it. One of the most distressing facets of the Ford Administration has been the betrayal of the great Republican tradition of conservation. [40 years -- Harding]

However many GOP's with us. Two of the greatest heroes of my youth were Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, Republicans and conservatives. They gave us of our national park and monument and forest systems, and they gave us a bipartisan conservation ethic that has benefited this nation immeasurably for the past 70 years. We conservationists owe much to our Republican brethren like John Saylor, Clifford Case, and Russell Train.

Against their record, we measure the brief administration of Gerald Ford, seeker of "de~~t~~ente with nature":

- a shrill last-ditch battle to defeat sensible strip mining legislation, marked by twisted and phony statistics, half-truths, and distortions.
- abandonment of last year's "top environmental priority" modest assistance to help our states and cities plan for the use of our disappearing land;
- attempts to pile delay upon delay in auto emission standards;
- ill-considered efforts to speed up offshore oil, oilshale and nuclear energy plants before the full environmental dangers and economic costs are known;
- selection of Hathaway -- instead of Train, Petern, Rockefeller.
- crippling understaffing of programs to protect our wildlife for observation and recreation;
- hints from the Attorney General that he would not be inclined to defend the clean air act;
- transfer of wildlife ranges to the exploitation- oriented Bureau of Land Management.

I suspect that if John Saylor were alive, these things never would have happened. He would have stormed the White House!

He was in the tradition of Teddy Roosevelt who wrote in 1910 that:

"The true conservative is he who insists that property shall be the servant and not the master of the commonwealth; who insists that the creature of man's making shall be the servant and not the master of the man who made it."

The conservatism of Gerald Ford and William Simon, in contrast, views corporate profit as the first, if not the sole index of economic health, without regard for efficient economic operation or a rational distribution of benefits. It is a 19th century business philosophy that views protection of our resources for future generations as an obstacle, not a goal.