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STATEMENT OF JOHN A. VOLPE, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BEFORE THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY, SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE, REGARDING THE PROPOSED "NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC PROGRAM ACT OF 1969" (S. 2802, S. 2841, and S. 3118), WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1970.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the problem of organization within the executive branch for the conduct of the Nation's marine science programs. As the President noted in his Message to Congress of February 10 concerning the environment, he has asked his Advisory Council on Executive Organization "to make an especially thorough study of the organization of Federal environmental, natural resource and oceanographic programs, and to report its recommendations . . . by April 15." Until those recommendations are received and the President has decided upon a course of action, it would be presumptuous of me to comment in detail on the organizational proposal set forth in S. 2841.

However, my views as to the desirability of retaining the Coast Guard as a major operating element of the Department of Transportation are no secret and I would like to lay out my reasoning for the Committee.

The enactment of the Department of Transportation Act brought under a single roof most of the Federal transportation programs. While the Department is still relatively new, the aggregation of previously dispersed modal agencies and functions has enabled us, we believe, to make some significant and otherwise unattainable advances -- with many more yet to come -- in achieving an integrated, efficient and balanced transportation system. I think, then, that it is entirely understandable that I view with the greatest

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concern any proposal to move one of the key agencies, the Coast Guard, to another location in the executive branch.

Many, indeed most, of our transportation problems can be attacked only on a multi- or intermodal basis -- for example containerization, hazardous cargoes, national navigation planning, bridge administration, and terminal transshipment problems, to mention but a few. The removal of the Coast Guard, this Department's maritime operating agency, out of the Department would strike at the very reasons for the existence of the Department, undermine the objectives of Congress in enacting the Department of Transportation Act, and create a significant gap in the structure needed to solve the problems which beset our overall transportation system. While we are anxious to support measures which will foster improved coordination and achievement in the area of marine science, I strongly object to the removal from the Department of operational activities directly and intimately involved in the maintenance and advancement of transportation safety and efficiency.

I would like to review briefly the principal functions of the Coast Guard and indicate how they relate to transportation. The Coast Guard has some 18 separate programs which support three major functions: maritime law enforcement, maritime safety, and military readiness.

The Coast Guard is the general maritime law enforcement agency of the Federal Government. Its responsibility in this field as defined by Congress in 1936 embodies the enforcement of all Federal laws upon the high seas and the navigable waters of the United States and its territories. In addition to the laws designed to regulate and promote navigation, they include a

broad spectrum of criminal law, oil pollution enforcement, port safety, conservation laws and treaties, and many others.

The Coast Guard is the principal maritime safety agency of the United States. Its programs include search and rescue, domestic icebreaking, aids to navigation, merchant vessel safety, boating safety and port safety, to name some of its major areas of operation. A world leader in its field, the Coast Guard is the United States' principal technical advisor in the Intergovernment Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) and is also deeply involved with other international maritime organizations.

Among other maritime safety activities of the Coast Guard are its administration of laws and regulations related to the inspection of merchant vessels and their safety equipment, as well as the licensing and certification of their officers and crews. These inspection activities include the review of plans for construction or alteration of merchant vessels; the periodic inspection of ships and their equipment; the inspection and approval of lifesaving and fire-fighting equipment; the supervision and enforcement of discipline on merchant vessels; and the investigation of marine casualties and accidents. The Coast Guard also makes a major contribution to the prevention of marine casualties through its operation of the country's extensive and complex system of aids to navigation. These include lighthouses, lightships, offshore structures, fog signals and buoys as well as sophisticated electronic systems serving both sea and air.

In addition, many of its present marine science projects are directly related to and support maritime safety, such as the National Data Buoy Project, which is aimed at understanding better, predicting better, and

perhaps in the future assisting in influencing or controlling, the environment in which transportation occurs.

The third major responsibility of the Coast Guard is, of course, that of maintaining its personnel and forces in a state of military readiness as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States. The Coast Guard is presently involved in the conflict in Vietnam, playing a major role in coastal counterinsurgency activities.

In quantitative terms, some 74 percent of the Coast Guard budget is devoted to maritime safety and law enforcement programs directly related to transportation, while 19 percent is devoted to military preparedness and operations, and 7 percent is devoted to marine science programs.

I favor and, in fact, encourage continued utilization of the Coast Guard in marine science and technology matters -- the intertwining of marine transportation safety and efficiency with marine science and technology makes this both logical and desirable. Remaining within the Department, the Coast Guard can in the future, as it does now -- regardless of where responsibility for marine science may ultimately be placed -- make very significant contributions to marine science on a very cost-effective basis and without detracting from the essential role it plays in our transportation system.

Under existing law, the Coast Guard is directed to conduct such oceanographic research, and to collect and analyze such oceanographic data as may be necessary in the national interest. The role of the Coast Guard in marine science is spelled out in further detail in the following statement of Departmental policy:

"In order to respond to national goals in a manner commensurate with its capacity and its missions, the Department of Transportation marine science program shall:

Identify, support and, as necessary, plan and implement policies and programs in furtherance of the Department's transportation and marine science responsibilities.

Press for the development within the Department of an improved research and development capability in the marine sciences, supported by a permanent staff of scientific and technical personnel having the highest possible level of professional competence and experience.

Accept responsibility to provide services in support of validated marine science projects within its capabilities.

Seek funds for additional capability for the marine sciences where there is a relative scientific technical or operational void in the Federal establishment and where management by the Department can be clearly cost-effective and in the national interest."

I would welcome any expansion of the Department's role in marine science which may be assigned, confident that the same high level of effectiveness would continue.

Prevention and control of maritime pollution in cooperation with the Department of Interior is one example of how the Coast Guard is responding pursuant to existing statutory and Departmental policies. Ship collisions, groundings and casualties constitute major threats to maritime safety. They almost invariably contribute to maritime pollution. Preventive safety measures such as ship design standards, the establishment of sea lanes, and the maintenance of aids to navigation by reducing the probability of accidents also serve to reduce or prevent pollution. Search and rescue is a corrective measure when the preventive measures fail. However, the Coast Guard has gone beyond these safety-related approaches to the pollution problem and has developed the imaginative air-drop oil containment system. When an accident occurs, this system can be swifly employed by the same personnel and vehicles used to carry out search and rescue operations.

Last December in supporting the President's expressed concern with environmental quality, I directed the development of a comprehensive Departmental plan for maritime pollution prevention, detection, and control which would tie together our various efforts in this area to assure the coordinated and effective use of all Departmental resources. This plan is due to be completed next month.

As part of the Nation's total attack on maritime pollution, there is a need to establish reference points from which we can determine biological and chemical changes in the offshore waters of the United States. Utilizing the same resources of personnel and vehicles which are already operating in offshore waters in furtherance of Coast Guard missions, we could assist in

monitoring the environmental changes occurring in these waters. Because this data would be collected incidentally to the Department's existing marine programs, it would be collected at relatively slight additional cost. The data acquired for pollution control could, of course, be modified or expanded as desired to meet the needs of other marine science programs.

I want to make it clear that my concern is not with the objectives to be sought by the creation of a new, separate marine agency -- we can all subscribe to the marine science policies and objectives set forth in section 102(a) of S. 2841. These are worthy of our dedication. The fact is, however, that they are but several among hundreds of other urgent national goals. The real key to the ultimate achievement of these, or any other, particular goals is the establishment of the priority to be assigned to their accomplishment and the allocation to them of sufficient resources. Forming a new agency as proposed in S. 2841 offers no guarantee that this will occur. On balance, it might -- and I believe it would -- have a negative effect by disrupting the attainment of other related and equally, or more important national objectives.

The goals to be pursued by the proposed new agency are interwoven with the goals of environmental quality, natural resource development, transportation, etc. Each of these goals requires the commitment of resources. Men, ships, aircraft, command and control, logistics, and technology are required for marine safety, marine law enforcement, marine data collection, pollution prevention, pollution containment, transportation technology, icebreaking, and so forth. Many of these same talents and facilities are also needed for

fisheries research, mapping and charting, resource mapping, environmental monitoring, environmental protection, and a host of other related functions.

We need to marshall all of our major resources in such a way as to obtain maximum utilization in achieving our interlocking goals in transportation, environmental quality, marine science, and other areas at least cost. Thus, there is clearly a need for close coordination of the various Federal programs. It is much less clear to me that there is a need for an entirely new independent agency.

It is evident from the President's Message of February 10 that he intends to move very aggressively to cope with our environmental problems. As I noted earlier, he has requested his Advisory Council on Executive Organization to make a comprehensive study of the Federal organization for environment, natural resource, and oceanographic programs. I would strongly urge that the Committee defer action on S. 2841 until it has had an opportunity to examine the President's proposals.

There are two other bills being considered today. S. 2082 concerns the establishment of coastal zone management programs, and S. 3118 the funding of coastal zone laboratories and other sea grant college programs. The Department of Interior has been assigned leadership responsibilities within the Administration in each of these areas. Therefore, with respect to both bills, I would defer to the views of the Secretary of Interior.

This concludes my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. I shall be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.