



United States Department of the Interior

EXECUTIVE

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5751

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

APR 26 1971

Dear Mr. Speaker:

There is enclosed a draft bill "To amend the Act of September 26, 1970 (84 Stat. 884)."

We recommend that the bill be referred to the appropriate Committee for consideration, and that it be enacted.

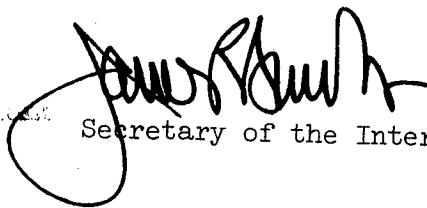
As enacted by the Congress and approved by the President on September 26, 1970, the Act entitled "To authorize the Secretaries of the Interior and the Smithsonian Institution to expend certain sums, in cooperation with the territory of Guam, the territory of American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, other United States territories in the Pacific Ocean, and the State of Hawaii, for the conservation of their protective and productive coral reefs" provides for joint administration by the Secretaries of the Interior and the Smithsonian Institution of a four-year program in areas of the tropical Pacific whose ecology is threatened by the seastar "Crown of Thorns". This new Act authorizes the appropriation of \$4.5 million for the period ending June 30, 1975, and provides for cooperation with and assistance to the State of Hawaii and the territories and possessions of the United States in their study and control of the Crown of Thorns starfish. We had supported enactment of this legislation as a means to assist in preservation of those coral reefs now endangered by the voracious Crown of Thorns.

On October 4, and subsequent to final approval of Public Law 91-427, there was established in the Department of Commerce the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970 was intended to provide for coordination of the Nation's oceanic activities, and for this reason, we believe that joint responsibility for administration of Public Law 91-427 should be vested in NOAA through the Secretary of Commerce. Although it might be argued that the Plan itself would effect this transfer of responsibility, we are concerned that no question of interpretation be allowed to diminish the prospects for this important program. Accordingly, the draft bill submitted herewith would simply amend the Act of September 26, 1970 by substituting the words "Secretary of Commerce" for the words "Secretary of the Interior" wherever they appear.

The enactment of this legislation would in no way affect our authority to participate fully in any program of control that involves Guam, the Trust Territory or other territories and possessions for which we have responsibility. As we noted in supporting S. 3153, the Department had commenced work on the problem in 1968 because of our responsibility and concern for the citizens of Guam and the Trust Territory. The problem is widespread, however, and has already attracted the attention of others, including the State of Hawaii, the National Science Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, the University of Guam, the Office of Naval Research, and the United States Coast Guard. Enactment of our draft legislation would facilitate coordination of these various research activities by NOAA, which has been charged by the President with "achieving a more comprehensive understanding of oceanic and atmospheric phenomena", and the Smithsonian Institution.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the presentation of this draft bill from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely yours,



Secretary of the Interior

Hon. Carl Albert
Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Enclosure

A B I L L

To amend the Act of September 26, 1970 (84 Stat. 884).

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Act entitled "To authorize the Secretaries of Interior and the Smithsonian Institution to expend certain sums, in cooperation with the territory of Guam, the territory of American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, other United States territories in the Pacific Ocean, and the State of Hawaii, for the conservation of their protective and productive coral reefs", approved September 26, 1970 (84 Stat. 884), is amended by striking out "Secretary of the Interior" where it twice appears and inserting in lieu thereof "Secretary of Commerce".