

## Module 10: How Will Historians Treat Richard Nixon?

### Evidence 8: Environment: Annual Message on the State of Union, January 30, 1974

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#### Question to Consider

- How does the evidence below refute or support the views of the three historians outlined in the Conclusion of this module?

#### Document

##### ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT

Both our Nation and the world have made imposing strides during recent years in coping with the problems of our natural environment. Building upon well-justified concerns, we have created institutions, developed policies and strategies, and deepened public understanding of the problems that face us. Now we are entering the second phase of environmental action. It may prove to be a more difficult period. In this second phase, we will be looking at our environmental problems in new ways which are more complex and far-reaching than those to which we have been accustomed. We must be concerned not only with clean air, clean water and wise land use but also with the interaction of these environmental efforts with our need to expand our energy supplies and to maintain general prosperity. In facing up to these tough, new problems, we can draw strength from the progress we have already made and from the knowledge that there can be no turning back from our general commitment to preserve and enhance the environment in which we live. Our record over these past five years includes the vigorous enforcement of air quality legislation and of strengthened water quality and pesticide control legislation, the enactment of new authorities to control noise and ocean dumping, regulations to prevent oil and other spills in our ports and waterways, and legislation establishing major new parks, recreation and wilderness areas. We have also tried to reorganize the Federal structure in ways that are more responsive to environmental needs. The National Environmental Policy Act, passed in 1969, has provided a basis for reform in our Federal agencies and has given citizens a greater opportunity to contribute to environmental

decisions. In 1970, I established the Environmental Protection Agency and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide more coordinated and vigorous environmental management. Also in that year, I appointed the first Council on Environmental Quality.

## PRODUCING RESULTS

The results of our vigorous anti-pollution efforts are now being seen and felt. In our major cities, levels of dangerous sulfur oxides and particulates have declined, and pollutants from automobiles have been reduced. Water pollution is being conquered, assisted by a massive Federal commitment of over \$14 billion in municipal treatment plants during this Administration. Major misuses of pesticides are now under control, and major sources of noise are being regulated for the first time. During these five years, Federal agencies have acquired over 800,000 additional acres for preservation for future generations, many of them near our heavily populated urban centers such as New York and San Francisco. In addition, the Legacy of Parks program, which I initiated in 1971, has made massive strides in bringing parks to the people. To date, 400 separate parcels covering almost 60,000 acres of under-utilized Federal lands in all 50 States have been turned over to State and local governments for park and recreational use. Many of them are near congested urban areas. We will continue to expedite transfer of additional surplus properties to State and local governments for park and recreation use.

Source:

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<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>.