

House Rejection of Land Use Bill Stirs Charges of 'Scare Tactics'

By Mary Russell
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Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton said yesterday the Nixon administration "very much" regrets that the House rejected the land use bill without debate.

"We have consistently urged the Congress to consider and enact sound land-use legislation," said a statement released by Morton.

At the same time, Democrats were repeating charges that "impeachment politics" by the administration and "scare tactics" by the right wing were responsible for the defeat of the land use bill on the House floor Tuesday.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), who twice guided the bill through Senate passage, vowed, "We've only begun to fight."

Jackson said he would try to attach the land use measure when some "must bill" the administration needs comes before the Senate. He declined to say what bill that might be.

During a joint press conference with the House sponsor of the bill, Rep. Morris Udall (D-Ariz.), Jackson said land use "became an expendable

pawn in the White House trading game of impeachment politics."

He blamed the President "personally" and said "pressure was put on Nixon by people he looks to for undying support in the impeachment process."

Said Udall: "We are told daily that in spite of Watergate, Mr. Nixon is firmly in control, that he is governing. Well, governing is not mortgaging the country's land for conservative votes on impeachment."

Both Jackson and Udall said strip mining control legislation, due to come before the House soon, may suffer the same fate.

Udall said the President "has begun to do the same kind of jig on the strip mining bill, and that one is now in doubt."

The bill to limit strip mining and provide for reclamation of the land has passed the Senate and has been reported by the House Interior Committee. Now, Jackson said, "A

last-minute substitute bill offered on behalf of the special interests (is) suddenly enjoying support of the administration."

The land use bill, which would have given federal aid to states seeking to develop land use planning programs, was killed 211 to 204 Tuesday on a procedural vote which would have set the terms of debate on the bill.

The bill had the support of the Nixon administration when it passed the Senate and up until the time it was about to be brought to the floor of the House early this year.

Then, after a visit to the White House by Interior Committee member Sam Steiger (R-Ariz.), an opponent of the bill, the White House reversed its position. It backed a weaker substitute sponsored by Steiger and House Minority Leader John Rhodes (R-Ariz.).

Morton, who was supporting the Udall bill, switched last week to supporting the Steiger-Rhodes bill.