

8 AGENCIES TOLD TO WITHHOLD DATA

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Author of Information Act Demands Secrecy

NYTimes

The Washington Star

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5—The principal architect of the Freedom of Information Act has had subpoenas sent to eight federal regulatory agencies to prevent them from publicly disclosing a mass of material compiled at his request.

Representative John E. Moss, Democrat of California who is chairman of a House Committee investigative subcommittee and the author in 1966 of the information act, had the subpoenas sent to agencies that are the subjects of a subcommittee investigation.

The subcommittee acted after apparently unsuccessful attempts last week to persuade

the agencies not to make the material available to The Washington Star, which had requested it.

The subpoenas, which arrived yesterday at the Federal Communications Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission, order the agencies to send to the subcommittee all originals and copies of questionnaires filled out at Mr. Moss's request. They also demand that the agencies turn over all working papers.

The F.C.C. sent Mr. Moss a letter last Friday advising him that it intended to make available to The Star much of the information from the questionnaires.

Property of Congress

Mr. Moss earlier told the agencies that the information was the property of Congress and that it should not be made public without subcommittee approval. In any case, he said, he does not intend to make any of it publicly available until after he and the subcommittee staff have examined it.

The questionnaires include information, much of it normal-

ly public, dealing with the manner in which the agencies operate. They include data on the industries regulated, the possibility of improper communications between agency officials and representatives of regulated companies, details on officials' travels and information about relationships between the agencies and the White House.

Reached in California, Mr. Moss said the subpoenas had been issued because "I took the steps that I feel are necessary precautions to preserve the integrity of the inquiry I'm making."

Advised that some of the material covered by the subpoenas was public information anyway, he said: "You're entitled to go to the agency and get anything that is publicly available. I'm not attempting to stop that right. But material that's compiled for me—and in some instances not even delivered to me—I have no intention of making public if I have not reviewed it."

The eight agencies receiving the subpoenas are the F.C.C., the I.C.C., Federal Trade Commission, Federal Power Com-

mission, Securities and Exchange Commission, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration.

Food Price 'Hotline' Planned

WASHINGTON, Aug. 4 (UPI)—The Agriculture Council of America said Monday it would set up a nationwide toll-free telephone "hotline" to take consumer complaints about efforts to use big grain sales to the Soviet Union as an excuse for food price increases. The farm group said United States crops would be so big this year that sales to the Russians could go well beyond current levels—up to 20 million tons, one wheat grower said—without hurting American consumers.

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