

Request for Antipollution Funds Is Lower Than Was Authorized

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—For the various programs administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, President Nixon's total 1973 budget request is almost exactly the same as last year.

Also, as in his two previous budgets, Mr. Nixon has requested far less money for pollution control than Congress authorized in the basic legislation on air and solid waste, and less than it will authorize in the pending bill on water cleanup.

Consequently, officials at the agency said they would not be surprised if Congress appropriated more than Mr. Nixon has requested for air and solid-waste programs. And they feel certain that for federal grants for sawage facilities—which account for over 80 per cent of the agency's budget—Congress will appropriate at least half again what the President has asked.

These officials also acknowledge that if Congress does this, the President, on the advice of the Office of Management and Budget, will spend little, if any, of the funds that exceed his request.

Therefore, it is a foregone conclusion that the environment is likely to be something of an issue in the Presidential campaign, and especially if Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine is the Democratic candidate. Mr. Muskie, as chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution, is the principal sponsor of legislation authorizing more money than the President wants to spend.

\$2-Billion for Sewage Works

Mr. Nixon's request for the Environmental Protection Agency totaled \$2.446-billion. Of this, \$2-billion—the same amount as requested for the fiscal year 1972—would be for the Federal share of sewage facilities. The remainder is for the agency's research facilities and its abatement and enforcement activities.

Since some of this \$446-million total

is intended to cover costs of some of the Administration's proposed legislation—if it passes—there has been almost no increase over last year for ongoing programs. The proposed legislation covers such matters as a ban on dumping waste in the ocean and studies of power plant location.

The budget for the water pollution program, the largest item, was seen by agency officials as one of the major uncertainties.

The Water Pollution Control Act expired last June. Since then, the water program has been financed under a continuing resolution that restricts spending to last year's level while Congress works out a new bill.

It appears likely that Congress will appropriate at least \$3 billion—\$1 billion above the President's request. This is what he just as certainly will refuse to spend.

During Senate consideration of the 1970 Clean Air Act, the Administration estimated that \$320-million would be needed in the fiscal year 1973 to implement its provisions. The act finally authorized \$300-million for that year. Mr. Nixon has asked for \$171.5-million—\$148.5-million less than his own estimate of need.

By the fiscal year 1973 Congress authorized \$238-million for the solid-waste program. Mr. Nixon has requested \$23.3-million, or \$11.3-million less than last year. The Administration has contended that it cannot efficiently spend as much as Congress authorized.

In the area of research and development, there will be a cut of \$5-million for development of improved waste water treatment technology. William D. Ruckelshaus, the E.P.A. administrator, said that greater reliance would be placed on private industry for such development. Last June, the President's Council on Environmental Quality said industry was not spending the money it should on such research.