

Nixon's ~~Emergency~~ Program --

He asks Emergency Powers

President Urges Nation To Lower Car Speeds And Home Thermostats

Washington

President Nixon proposed a wide-ranging energy conservation program last night that would give him standby authority to ration gasoline and fuel oil, reduce speed limits, exempt industries from environmental controls and impose taxes for excessive use of energy.

The President also called for a series of voluntary controls by Americans, such as increased use of car pools and lower thermostat settings in homes and factories, intended to save between 2 and 3 million barrels of oil a day.

John Love, the President's chief energy policy advisor, said that the administration's request for the standby controls would be incorporated into pending legislation written by Senator Henry Jackson (Dem-Wash.).

PLANS

Love said the administration is already developing plans for rationing heating oil and gasoline. He said it is probable but "not inevitable" that these would be put into effect this winter.

Before the administration embarks on such a rationing plan, which Love said could resemble the gas rationing program of World War II, every voluntary measure should be tried because rationing would be "one of the most horrendous exercises ever undertaken by government."

Jackson said gasoline rationing is inevitable. He predicted the energy shortage will ultimately force the government to order some industries to close.

Jackson, chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, said his panel would complete action tomorrow on a bill to give the administration authority to ration gasoline and to reduce highway speed limits to 50 miles per

EMBARGO

Mr. Nixon spoke only in passing of the Arab oil embargo, which he said would cause a supply gap of 10 to 17 per cent in oil supplies this winter. Oil accounts for about half the total energy consumed in this country. Of the 17 million barrels of crude and refinery products that have been burned every day about 2 million have come, directly and indirectly, from Arab states.

Mr. Nixon spoke deliberately of "Middle Eastern" producers in what officials had said was a conscious attempt to avoid anything that

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might ring in Arab ears as a tone of rancor or retaliation.

"We have an energy crisis," Mr. Nixon said, "but there is not crisis of the American spirit."

LEGISLATION

The emergency legislation sought by the President also would give him authority to:

- Curtail outdoor electrical advertising and ornamental lighting such as Christmas displays.

- Reduce commercial operating hours.

- Authorize year-round daylight saving time.

The legislation also would allow increased oil production from the Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserve in California. The reserve is on land owned by the U.S. Navy. Under the President's proposal, money received from sale of this oil could also be used for further exploration at Elk Hills and on government-owned land in

Alaska.

The plan proposed by the

President would greatly increase the use of coal in the U.S.

Acting under existing emergency authority, the President said regulations are being issued that prevent utilities and industrial plants from switching from coal to petroleum fuels. This is intended to reduce a growing demand for residual oil.

Thermostats in federal buildings will be reduced to a range of 65 degrees to 68 degrees, which will save an estimated 19 per cent against the amount of energy they used last winter.

GASOLINE

Mr. Nixon asked that homeowners also lower their thermostats and that factories make an equivalent reduction through lowering thermostats or curtailing working hours.

In an attempt to reduce

gasoline demand, the President directed that operators of all federal motor vehicles observe a 50-mile-an-hour speed limit. He urged governors to seek similar limits in their states and urged state and local governments to set aside bus lanes, establish higher parking taxes, block off certain city districts to cars with only one occupant and provide preferential parking for car pools.

The 50-mile-an-hour limit could be set by the government on all federally assisted highways, under the emergency legislation requested by Mr. Nixon.

"This action alone, if adopted on a nationwide basis, could save over 200,000 barrels of oil a day," Mr. Nixon said.

The president also ordered reduced quantities of fuel for aircraft, which will lead to a 10 per cent cutback in flights and rescheduling of arrival and departure times.

NUCLEAR

Mr. Nixon asked the Atomic Energy Commission to speed up the licensing of nuclear plants in an effort to reduce the time from their proposal to completion from ten years to six years.

Along with Mr. Nixon's proposals for immediate fuel conservation and his call for standby rationing controls,

the President proposed a long-term conservation policy aimed at making the U.S. self-sufficient in energy by 1980.

He called this goal "Project Independence" and compared it to the Manhattan Project, which produced the atomic bomb, and Project Apollo, which enabled the U.S. to put a man on the moon in 1969 — six months ahead of the goal set by President Kennedy.

The President set no price tag on Project Independence, but governors who met with him earlier in the day at the White House said that the figure of \$20 billion was used.

While the President in his message spoke of an "appropriate balancing" of environmental interests with energy needs, the immediate effect of the energy message appeared to be a setback for environmentalists.

EXEMPTIONS

The legislation sought by the administration would authorize the President, acting through the Environmental Protection Agency, to exempt factories and other stationary sources of pollution from federal and state air and water quality laws.

This would not have the effect of repealing any laws or lowering any standards. But it would affect the ambitious attempts of anti-pollution agencies to clean up American waterways and improve air pollution standards during the next decade.

The increased burning of coal will also result in an increase in air pollution.

AUTHORITY

The emergency legislation would also give the President broad authority to sidestep federal regulatory agencies in various circumstances.

All actions under the proposed act would be exempt from the National Environmental Policy Act. Upon declaration of an emergency by the President, all regulatory agencies would consider energy conservation as one of their purposes.

Such agencies as the Interstate Commerce Commission would be authorized to change rates and schedules based on energy considerations. The Federal Power Commission would be authorized to suspend the regulation of prices on natural gas. And the Atomic Energy Commission would be empowered to grant a temporary license of up to 18 months without a public hearing.