

Today we are in the midst of a depression — a depression in the handling of our natural resources. This is not a depression of scarcity — it is not caused by a lack of power or water or land. It is due to despoilment, underdevelopment and neglect — it is due to a lack of faith and a lack of vision. And every day in which we lack leadership — every day in which no plans are drawn or efforts made — plunges us deeper into this depression.

Some of these failures are of special importance to the people of Wisconsin — all of them are of vital concern to the entire nation.

First is the failure in our national forests. These forests are one of our most valuable assets — they cover a large part of Wisconsin — they provide timber for your important construction and paper industries. Throughout the nation they are the major source of water for more than 1600 cities and towns — they drive more than 600 hydroelectric projects — they provide a source of recreation — not only in Wisconsin but for millions of Americans all over the country. Yet the Administration has refused to spend more than fifty per cent of the funds which its own Secretary of Agriculture has said are essential if we are to preserve this great natural resource. Our forests are being allowed to deteriorate from misuse and lack of effort.

Second is the failure to keep our water clean. The Administration has opposed all efforts to meet the growing threat of water pollution. Today a Presidential veto hangs over the modest program of Federal aid which Congress has just passed — a program which is essential if we are to halt the destructive and dangerous contamination of our water supply.

-Kennedy, John F., "Statement of Senator John F. Kennedy, Medford, Wisconsin, February 25, 1960" (1960) excerpt.