

TESTIMONY OF GOVERNOR JIM FLORIO

BEFORE THE

1

UNITED STATES SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON

SUPERFUND, OCEAN AND WATER POLLUTION

MONDAY, MAY 21, 1990

GOOD MORNING, SENATOR LAUTENBERG.

THANK YOU FOR THE CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT ONE OF NEW JERSEY'S MOST VALUED RESOURCES: THE JERSEY SHORE.

IN THE PAST YOU AND I WORKED TOGETHER, SHAPING LEGISLATION TO KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN AND SAFE. WE WILL KEEP WORKING TOGETHER, BECAUSE NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WE MUST BOLSTER FEDERAL-STATE COOPERATION TO PROTECT THE JERSEY SHORE.

I'M ALSO PLEASED TO BE HERE FOR A DIFFERENT REASON. IT'S ALMOST SUMMER AND THAT MEANS A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE WONDERING IF IT'S SAFE TO COME TO THE SHORE. I WANT EVERYONE ACROSS THE NATION TO KNOW THAT THE JERSEY SHORE HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER.

FEW PLACES IN THE WORLD RIVAL OUR 127 MILES OF SHORE LINE. OUR WIDE, WHITE SAND BEACHES. OUR BRISK AND BRACING OCEAN WATER.

FEW PLACES BURST WITH SO MUCH LIFE. OUR BRACKISH SALT WATER MARSHES ARE HOME TO ALL KINDS OF FISH AND BIRDS.

AND FEW PLACES GENERATE AS MUCH TOURISM. CLOSE TO EIGHT BILLION DOLLARS WERE SPENT AT THE SHORE LAST SUMMER, MAKING IT TWO-THIRDS OF NEW JERSEY'S ENTIRE TOURIST INDUSTRY.

AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT WE GUARD OUR TREASURE WELL.

THERE IS NO GREATER OPERATION FOR KEEPING BEACHES CLEAN AND WATER PURE THAN THE ONE WE NOW HAVE.

UNFORTUNATELY WE HAD TO LEARN THE HARD WAY THAT WE NEEDED TO DO MORE. A FEW SUMMERS AGO DEBRIS -- INCLUDING FRIGHTENING MEDICAL WASTE -- WASHED UP ON OUR BEACHES. OUR WATER BECAME UNFIT FOR FISH, LET ALONE PEOPLE.

MAY BE IT TOOK A SUMMER AWAY FROM THE SHORE TO MAKE US REALIZE THAT WE COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT. WE MUST NEVER AGAIN WRITE OFF A SUMMER AT THE JERSEY SHORE.

SO WE'RE GOING ALL OUT TO KEEP THE SHORE CLEAN. WE EXPECT A HEALTHY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENJOY THE JERSEY SHORE THIS SUMMER.

THERE'S A NEW KIND OF LIFEGUARD -- SCIENTISTS, ACTIVISTS, ENGINEERS ARE ALL PITCHING IN. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE. THEY'RE PICKING UP GARBAGE, TESTING WATER AND WATCHING FROM HELICOPTERS ABOVE.

WE GO AT LOW TIDE TO THE BANKS OF OUR RIVERS AND BAYS, PICKING UP MATERIAL THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY REFLOAT AND MAKE IT TO THE BEACH. AS OF LAST WEEK WE PICKED UP 1.5 MILLION POUNDS OF GARBAGE WE WON'T SEE AT THE SHORE THIS SUMMER.

WE'RE ALSO SKIMMING THE WATER, WITH HELP FROM THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CAPTURING FLOATING DEBRIS. I APPLAUD YOUR

EFFORTS AND CONGRESSMAN PALLONE'S TO PASS LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REQUIRE THE CORPS TO GIVE US THAT HELP EVERY YEAR.

BUT IF WE WAIT FOR THE POLLUTION TO MAKE IT INTO THE WATER, WE'LL BE FIGHTING A LOSING BATTLE. SO WE NOW GO RIGHT TO POTENTIAL POLLUTION SOURCES. THIS YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME, THANKS TO OUR LAWSUIT, NEW YORK CITY WILL PUT "SUPERBOOMS" AROUND THE FRESH KILLS LANDFILL IN STATE ISLAND. THAT LANDFILL, THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD, HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THE POLLUTION ALONG OUR NORTHERN SHORE.

I WILL ALSO SIGN ON WEDNESDAY THE NATION'S TOUGHEST CLEAN WATER ENFORCEMENT ACT, WHICH WILL GIVE US THE TOOLS WE NEED TO PROTECT OUR LAKES, STREAMS, RIVERS AND OCEAN.

AND I KNOW YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO HEAR, SENATOR, THAT THE LEGISLATION YOU AND I SPONSORED TO PREVENT MEDICAL WASTE FROM REACHING OUR SHORE IS WORKING. BY MONITORING MEDICAL WASTE FROM "CRADLE TO GRAVE," WE WILL MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T REST ON OUR BEACHES ALONG THE WAY.

HELICOPTERS LAST WEEK BEGAN FLYING UP AND DOWN THE COAST. THE WORD FROM THE SKY WAS THAT ALL IS CLEAR. BUT IF THEY DO SEE ANY FLOATING GARBAGE SLICKS WE'LL HEAD THEM OFF BEFORE THEY REACH OUR BEACHES.

IF ANYTHING GETS BY US WE'LL KNOW BECAUSE WE ARE TESTING WATER QUALITY UP AND DOWN THE SHORE. WE TEST AT 335 SITES, THE MOST EXTENSIVE OCEAN TESTING PROGRAM IN THE WORLD.

IT'S IRONIC. OUR TESTING PROGRAM IS SO RIGOROUS, MORE SO THAN ANY OTHER STATE, AND WE ARE SO OPEN WITH THE INFORMATION, THAT PEOPLE TEND TO PAY A LOT MORE ATTENTION TO WATER QUALITY AT THE JERSEY SHORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE. THAT'S WHY I'M PLEASED TO SEE THAT YOU, SENATOR LAUTENBERG, AND CONGRESSMAN HUGHES ARE PROPOSING A LAW TO PROVIDE FEDERAL STANDARDS FOR OCEAN WATER TESTING.

I HOPE FOR THE NATION'S SAKE THAT THOSE STANDARDS ARE AS TOUGH AS NEW JERSEY'S.

AND EVEN THOUGH OUR TESTING IS THE BEST IN THE NATION, WE'RE NOT SATISFIED. OUR DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS A PARTNER IN A \$100,000 STUDY TO IMPROVE OUR WATER TESTING CAPABILITY. WE ALSO HAVE PUT TO SEA, FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW, A STATE-OF-THE-ART WATER MONITORING VESSEL.

BUT POLLUTION DOESN'T COME OUT OF THIN AIR. IT EXISTS BECAUSE FACTORIES, AND SAD TO SAY, PEOPLE, AREN'T CAREFUL. OR, WORSE, THEY JUST DON'T CARE. SO I ASK EVERYONE WHO COMES TO THE SHORE TO CLEAN UP AFTER THEMSELVES.

ALL POTENTIAL POLLUTERS, LARGE OR SMALL, SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY CAN NO LONGER "THROW AWAY AND GET AWAY." THAT'S WHY I APPOINTED THE NATION'S FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL PROSECUTOR. ANYONE

THINKING OF POLLUTING OUR WATER AND BEACHES: DON'T. BECAUSE IT WON'T BE JUST YOUR GARBAGE WE'LL PICK UP, WE'LL PICK YOU UP TOO. THE GARBAGE WILL GO TO THE DUMP, AND YOU'LL GO TO JAIL.

WE TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THE JERSEY SHORE. NOT JUST SO WE CAN ENJOY IT NOW, BUT SO IT'S AROUND FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN TO ENJOY.

THERE'S STILL MORE WE CAN DO. THE OIL SPILLS IN THE ARTHUR KILL, AND THE VALDEZ INCIDENT IN ALASKA, SHOULD BE ALL THE WARNING WE NEED OF THE THREAT TO OUR BEACHES. THAT'S WHY I'M PLEASED TO SEE THAT YOU, SENATOR LAUTENBERG, ARE PROPOSING A BILL THAT WOULD GREATLY INCREASE THE LIABILITY OF OIL COMPANIES.

IT TOOK A LOT OF HARD WORK CLEANING UP THE MISTAKES OF YESTERDAY TO MAKE THE SHORE READY TO ENJOY THIS SUMMER. LET'S PREVENT THE MISTAKES OF TOMORROW, SO THE JERSEY SHORE IS READY EVERY SUMMER.

THANK YOU.