

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN  
ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
12TH ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONGRESS  
PRINCETON DAY SCHOOL  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1985

YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS, AND HOW MUCH COMMITMENT IT TAKES TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THIS FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT WE LIVE IN. MANY OF YOU ARE THE EXPERTS OTHERS LOOK TO FOR ADVICE AND LEADERSHIP. AND NOW THAT THE ENVIRONMENT HAS TAKEN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE AT CENTER STAGE OF THE PUBLIC DEBATE, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS GREATER THAN EVER.

I HOPE YOU WELCOME IT, AS I DO,, AND I PRAY THAT YOU USE IT WISELY.

I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T BE ADDRESSING MY REMARKS AT "YOU" -- I SHOULD SAY "WE". BECAUSE, FRANKLY, I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE ONE OF YOU.

I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF MANY OF YOUR ORGANIZATIONS. AND I NOW JOIN YOU IN OUR MUTUAL CAUSE -- TO CLEAN UP AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. TO PLAN WISELY. TO PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY AS WE GROW. TO LEAVE OUR LITTLE PIECE OF THE EARTH, AS DWIGHT EISENHOWER SAID, BETTER THAN WE FOUND IT.

I WAS A SPONSOR OF OUR TWO MAJOR COASTAL PROTECTION LAWS --  
CAFRA AND THE COASTAL WETLANDS PROTECTION ACT.

THE ENVIRONMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PRIORITY FOR ME. SO I  
HOPE IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT IT HAS BEEN MY PRIORITY AS GOVERNOR.

THE ENVIRONMENT IS PROBABLY THE ISSUE UPON WHICH NEW  
JERSEY'S FUTURE IS HINGED. WHICH WAY AND HOW HARD WE PUSH THIS  
STATE'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS WILL DETERMINE WHERE WE AS A  
STATE WILL GO. SO IT NOT ONLY WILL BE -- IT MUST BE -- MY  
PRIORITY IN A SECOND TERM. IF WE FAIL TO MEET OUR CHALLENGES IN  
THIS AREA, WE CAN GAIN SUCCESS IN NO OTHER.

MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT A PRIORITY IS GOING TO COST MONEY.  
YOU AND I KNOW THAT THE TASK AHEAD OF US IS GOING TO BE  
EXPENSIVE.

LIKE AT SCP IN CARLSTADT WHERE WE REMOVED OVER 350,000 GALLONS OF HAZARDOUS LIQUID. HE THOUGHT IT WAS STILL THERE. IT'S NOT. WE'VE ALREADY REMOVED 90% OF THE MATERIAL.

LIKE AT MYERS PROPERTY IN FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP -- WHERE WE TOOK AWAY 90 TONS OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. HE THOUGHT WE HADN'T DONE ANYTHING YET.

LIKE, THIS WEEK, AT SIGNO TRADING, WHERE WE'D REMOVED 3 MILLION POUNDS OF HAZARDOUS MATERIAL -- WHICH HE WRONGLY ACCUSED US OF STORING IN NEW JERSEY.

IN ALL, WE HAVE TAKEN ACTION -- I MEAN ACTUAL BARRELS REMOVED AND SHOVELS IN THE GROUND -- AT WELL OVER 350 TOXIC WASTE SITES.

AND LET ME MENTION THAT WHILE FEASIBILITY STUDIES TAKE AN AVERAGE OF 22 MONTHS TO COMPLETE NATIONALLY, HERE THEY TAKE AN AVERAGE OF ONLY 12 MONTHS. THAT IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVE A "SUPER AGENCY" -- DEP -- RUNNING THE SHOW.

TOXIC WASTE, ON THE MERITS, SHOULD BE AN ISSUE.

TOXIC WASTE POSES A THREAT TO THE HEALTH OF EVERY NEW JERSEYAN. WE NEED A HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAM TO CLEAN UP THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST. WE NEED AN EFFORT TO ATTRACT THE BEST SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL TALENT IN THE COUNTRY TO DEAL WITH THIS EXTREMELY COMPLEX PROBLEM. AND THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT WE HAVE.

BUT TOXIC WASTE IS NOT AN ISSUE ON WHICH TO TREAD LIGHTLY. IT'S A SERIOUS -- DEADLY SERIOUS -- ISSUE. IT'S NOT AN ISSUE ON WHICH ONE SHOULD SHOOT FROM THE HIP BEFORE LEARNING THE FACTS. TO DO THAT IS NOTHING SHORT OF IRRESPONSIBLE.

AND YOU KNOW THE COMPLEXITY OF THE TASK WE FACE. YOU KNOW THE STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY. YOU KNOW THE SLOW PACE OF SUPERFUND MONEY FROM WASHINGTON. YOU KNOW ABOUT DISPOSAL. YOU KNOW ABOUT INSURANCE. YOU APPRECIATE THE NEED FOR SOPHISTICATED FEASIBILITY STUDIES.

OUR TOXIC WASTE STRATEGY IS SHAPED AROUND ALL THESE FACTORS. OUR FIRST AND OVERRIDING PRIORITY IS TO REMOVE OR CONTROL THE IMMEDIATE HEALTH THREAT. WE HAVE DONE THAT AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO THAT. SECOND, WE BEGIN FEASIBILITY STUDIES TO DETERMINE THE OVERALL CLEANUP OPTION. THIRD, WE DO THE LONG-TERM CLEANUPS THE WAY THEY SHOULD BE DONE: CAREFULLY, COMPLETELY, AND FOREVER -- IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES.

THIS IS A STRATEGY THAT WORKS. BUT DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT. ASK THE NEW YORK TIMES, WHICH THREE WEEKS AGO SAID, "NEW JERSEY'S APPROACH TO TOXIC WASTE CLEANUP IS A MODEL FOR THE REST OF THE NATION."

THEN, HE WENT TO KEARNY -- WHERE, BY THE WAY, HIS COUNTY DUMPS ITS GARBAGE -- AND SAID YOU SHOULDN'T BE DUMPED ON ANYMORE. BUT THERE WAS NO THIRD VISIT THAT DAY. NO VISIT TO ANOTHER TOWN TO SAY -- "WE'RE BRINGING THE PROBLEMS OF THOSE OTHER TWO TOWNS HERE." NO, THERE WERE NO SOLUTIONS PROVIDED -- EXCEPT TO RECREATE NASA AND PUT PINS IN A MAP. I WISH IT WERE THAT EASY.

IN ANY OTHER AREA, BE IT TAX CUTS OR INSURANCE REFORM, CAMPAIGN RHETORIC IS HARMLESS. BUT THE LAST THING WE NEED WHEN IT COMES TO TOXIC WASTE CLEANUP IS DISTORTIONS AND HYPERBOLE. WE DON'T NEED MORE ANXIETY AND APPREHENSION. PRESS RELEASES AND HOT AIR WON'T CLEAN UP TOXIC WASTE DUMPS. THEY JUST ADD TO OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS.

WHAT WE DO NEED IS FOR POLITICIANS TO TAKE RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS. TO TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN THE FACTS. AND TO BE WILLING TO DEVOTE THE RESOURCES OVER THE LONGER TERM TO DO THE JOB.

AND IT IS THOSE PEOPLE WHO GET AWFULLY TIRED OF BEING CONVENIENT TARGETS FOR OPPORTUNISTS LOOKING TO GET ELECTED. THEY DON'T THINK THIS CAMPAIGN IS VERY FUNNY.

WHAT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT IS THAT THE HYPERBOLE WILL SCARE GOOD PEOPLE AWAY. AND THAT WILL BE A LASTING BLOW TO OUR CLEANUP EFFORT.

THERE IS ONE FINAL THING THAT BOTHERS ME. THIS CAMPAIGN'S FOCUS ON ONE TOPIC -- IMPORTANT AS IT MAY BE -- HAS CREATED THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS IS THE ONLY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE FACING THE STATE. WELL, AS YOU AND I KNOW, THAT'S JUST NOT TRUE. IT IGNORES A HOST OF CRITICAL ISSUES -- ISSUES ON WHICH, QUITE FRANKLY, MY ADMINISTRATION HAS A STRONG RECORD.

TAKE CLEAN WATER, FOR EXAMPLE.



SECONDLY, I WANT TO ASK ALL OF YOU TO VOTE FOR THOSE THREE QUESTIONS -- AND TO WORK AS HARD AS YOU CAN TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY ONE YOU KNOW VOTES FOR THEM, TOO.

THE TRUST FUND MONEY WILL ALSO GO TO BUILD RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITIES TO HELP ALLEVIATE OUR GARBAGE CRISIS. THIS ADMINISTRATION, UNLIKE THE PRIOR ONES, HAS PURSUED A CONSCIOUS STRATEGY OF ENFORCING THE PROVISIONS OF THE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976. WE HAVE CLOSED OVER 100 UNSAFE LANDFILLS TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF NEARBY RESIDENTS. WHEN I TOOK OFFICE, ONLY TWO COUNTIES WERE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW, TODAY ALL BUT A HANDFUL ARE.

IT CERTAINLY HAS NOT BEEN A PAINLESS PROCESS. BUT WE HAVE DONE IT. BECAUSE IT IS THE LAW, AND BECAUSE WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF ROOM -- QUICKLY -- FOR OUR GARBAGE.

LET'S TAKE ANOTHER ISSUE -- ONE AT THE CENTER OF NEW JERSEY'S FUTURE -- THAT'S BEEN GLOSSED OVER LIGHTLY IN THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN. THAT ISSUE IS GROWTH.

THE ISSUE THAT'S THREATENED TO LIGHT AN UNCONTROLLABLE FIRE OF GROWTH IN NEW JERSEY FOR A DECADE HAS BEEN MT. LAUREL. AND FOR A DECADE, NO ONE ACTED. THAT IS, UNTIL WE DID.

I NEGOTIATED, WROTE, AND ULTIMATELY SIGNED A LAW WHICH, FOR THE FIRST TIME, INJECTS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO THE MT. LAUREL DEBATE. CONSIDERATIONS LIKE TREATING SEWAGE. LIKE PRESERVING OPEN SPACE. LIKE REHABILITATING CITIES INSTEAD OF ABANDONING THEM TO BUILD NEW ONES.

THAT NEW MT. LAUREL LAW WILL TEMPER OUR GROWTH WITH PLANNING. IT WILL MAKE SURE THAT IN OUR PURSUIT OF ONE GOAL -- THE ADMIRABLE ONE OF FAIR HOUSING -- WE DON'T RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER ANOTHER -- THAT OF PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT.

EVENTUALLY, WE MUST END OCEAN DUMPING. WHY? TO PROTECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE ALONG OUR 128 MILES OF SHORE. I AM PROUD THAT OUR COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IS WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE ONE OF THE THREE BEST IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. UNDER MY ADMINISTRATION, FOR THE FIRST TIME, MONEY FOR SHORE PROTECTION PROJECTS IS GOING ONLY TO MUNICIPALITIES THAT ARE WORKING TO PROTECT NATURAL AREAS.

FOR 25 YEARS, NEW JERSEY HAS BEEN A LEADER IN THE ACQUISITION OF STATE, COUNTY, AND MUNICIPAL PARKLANDS. THAT RECORD OF LEADERSHIP HAS CONTINUED UNDER THIS ADMINISTRATION.

DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE ACQUIRED SOME 34,000 ACRES OF OPEN SPACE, FROM 1600 ACRES IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY TO PROTECT THE STATES ONLY BALD EAGLE NEST, TO ONE SEVENTH OF AN ACRE IN HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP TO PROVIDE CONTINUITY FOR THE DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL STATE PARK.

OUR ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE NATION'S BEST. IN THE LATE 1950'S, THERE WASN'T ONE PERERGINE FALCON EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI. TODAY, NEW JERSEY HAS MORE PEREGRINE FALCON THAT ALL OTHER STATES EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI COMBINED. IT APPEARS THAT OUR BALD EAGLE POPULATION, TOO, IS ON THE WAY UP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS.

THOSE ARE JUST SOME OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I MENTION THEM NOT ONLY BECAUSE I THINK THEY ARE IMPRESSIVE -- BUT BECAUSE THEY'RE IMPORTANT. THEY DESERVE TO BE ISSUES THAT ARE TALKED ABOUT IN A CAMPAIGN -- AND CONSIDERED WHEN LOOKING AT AN ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD.

I HAVEN'T EVEN MENTIONED WATER SUPPLY. AN AREA WHERE WE TURNED BACK A DROUGHT THROUGH OUR ABILITY TO MANAGE WATER -- AND WHERE, RIGHT NOW, WE'RE UPDATING STUDIES THAT HAVEN'T BEEN UPDATED IN 70 YEARS.

BUT BY LOOKING AT ALL THESE ISSUES, FROM TOXIC WASTE TO PROTECTION OF OUR ENDANGERED SPECIES TO WATER SUPPLY, I THINK YOU CAN SEE A PORTRAIT OF AN ADMINISTRATION -- AN ADMINISTRATION WHOSE COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT IS AS BROAD AS IT IS DEEP.

IT IS AN ADMINISTRATION THAT HAS GIVEN TOP PRIORITY TO THE ENVIRONMENT -- TO TACKLING COMPLEX AND OFTEN DIFFICULT PROBLEMS HEAD ON, INSTEAD OF ATTACKING THEM WITH SLOGANS AND PROMISES.

THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS DARED TO BE INNOVATIVE.

AND NOW, IN PART BECAUSE OF THAT INNOVATION, WE LEAD THE COUNTRY.

FROM TOXIC WASTE TO GARBAGE, SOME OF THE MISTAKES AND LAX ATTITUDES OF THE PAST HAVE COME BACK TO HAUNT US TODAY. OUR SUCCESS IN SOLVING THESE PROBLEMS TODAY, WILL DETERMINE THE WORLD OUR CHILDREN LIVE IN TOMORROW.

WILL IT BE A WORLD IN WHICH WE'RE AFRAID TO DRINK THE WATER, IN WHICH THERE IS NO UNSPOILED SPACE, IN WHICH OUR OCEAN IS DESTROYED?

OR WILL IT BE A WORLD FILLED WITH PURE WATER, WITH CLEAN AIR TO BREATHE, WITH A HEALTHY MIX OF WILDERNESS AND CITY, OF FOREST AND FARM, OF WORK SPACE AND OPEN SPACE?

I KNOW WE CAN LEAVE THAT LATTER WORLD TO OUR CHILDREN. BUT RECKLESS RHETORIC WON'T DO IT. IT TAKES RESPONSIBLE, THOUGHTFUL AND DEDICATED ACTION.

IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS, I THINK YOU HAVE SEEN THAT KIND OF ACTION ON A HOST OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. I THINK YOU HAVE SEEN PROGRESS. I THINK YOU HAVE SEEN US MOVE TOWARDS THE GOAL WE SHARE OF A CLEAN NEW JERSEY.

THIS MORNING, I HUMBLY ASK YOU, TO GIVE ME A CHANCE TO KEEP THAT PROGRESS GOING.

THANK YOU.