

Mathias returns from 5-day tour

'Action needed on Bay'

By PETER RUEHL
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Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, arriving in Annapolis yesterday from a five-day fact-finding tour of the Chesapeake Bay, said the bay is not a dead sea yet but eventually will be if action is not taken quickly.

"Pollution by human sewage is the most dangerous and difficult problem," Mathias said at the City Dock. "It's a very dangerous kind of situation."

The senator also complained that the federal government is holding back millions of dollars for treatment facilities, with Maryland paying both its own and the federal government's share.

As an ironic sideline, he noted that the federal and state governments are major Bay polluters.

Before leaving for the tour which covered both Bay shorelines, Mathias had said that environmentalists are constantly losing ground in the battle against pollution of the Bay.

Yesterday, he said his trip confirmed those remarks. "We know that unless we move very rapidly, we're not going to get on top of the problem. We have room to run but not very much."

During the trip, taken on a boat supplied and navigated by Eldred Rinehart, a prominent Maryland Republican, Mathias said he spoke with state and local officials on both shores about what they thought had to be done to save the Bay.

An aide to Mathias said some community officials met on the trip had shown a certain amount of naivete regarding solutions to environmental issues, and that those persons will have to be supplied with

are too many agencies operating independently of each other. This not only leads to duplication of efforts, but also confuses attempts at solutions, he added.

"If you want to get anything done, you have to cut through all that seaweed," Mathias complained. What is needed, he said, is an agency which can coordinate the efforts of the federal, Maryland, Delaware and Virginia governments.

There is also need for further scientific research to combat pollution, he said, adding "a

clearing-house for easier communication" should be set up.

"There's room to hope a great deal," he claimed, "but we need public interest and support."

Mathias said his trip, which covered 375 miles by water, 100 by land and 100 by air, convinced him that "something really has to happen."

He noted that clams were taken off the market last week and that many areas of the Bay are closed to oystering.

In the area of impacted

sewage treatment funds, Mathias said Gov. Marvin Mandel has pressured the federal government and that President Nixon, he predicted, will soon release them.

Some of the projects on which the state is still awaiting payment from the Environmental Protection Agency date back to the administration of then — Gov. and now Vice-President Spiro T. Agnew.

"The courts also are releasing impounded funds," Mathias said. "It's too bad we had to go about it that way."

