

REMARKS ON TELEVISION PROGRAM,
"OUR BEAUTIFUL POTOMAC"
WRC-TV, WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 20, 1959

Question: I stipulate that the Potomac is one of Maryland's most important natural resources. . .and would like to ask Governor Tawes what the State is doing to protect it from destruction by pollution.

Answer: In my judgment there is no reason at all to assume that the Potomac River is in danger of destruction by pollution. Communities upstream from the District of Columbia, with two minor exceptions, are in good shape with regard to sewage treatment facilities. This, of course, anticipates the connection of three small communities to the new waste treatment works being created by the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company, in the Luke-Westernport area. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission has worked hand-in-hand with the District of Columbia authorities in financing the new Blue Plains sewage treatment works serving the District of Columbia and the adjacent Maryland area. Down river from the District there are no Maryland communities discharging untreated wastes into the Potomac. We would not deny, however, the existence of two pollution problems, for which there are, at present, no corrective answers. One, and the more serious of the two, is that of pollution by silt. The second is the pollution of the upper reaches of the North Branch where acid mine drainage is a significant problem. I believe that Maryland authorities stand ready, however, to assume their full share of the costs of study, research and resulting construction which will be required to bring both of these problems under control. Maryland has been participating actively in the Washington Metropolitan Regional Sanitary Board which was recently organized, pursuant to a recommendation of the Bible Committee. Both through this Board and the Washington Metropolitan Regional Conference, made up of local governmental officials, efforts are being carried forward to promote the most active possible cooperation between governmental jurisdictions on both sides of the river in developing a program for joint planning of sewerage services and facilities to serve the area upriver from the District of Columbia. To a very large degree, this activity, just described, is preventive in character and will obviate the development of sewage pollution problems which would later have to be corrected in order that the river would not be degraded. We believe that the Washington Suburban Sanitary