

4-1-1994

Earth Day

Max S. Baucus

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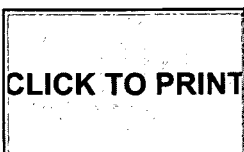
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BAUCUS

4/1994

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U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

(202) 224-6176

Remarks of Senator Max Baucus

Earth Day 1994

This report could not have come at a better time. The Senate is about to begin debate on a new Clean Water Act, and a new Safe Drinking Water Act.

For 22 years, our national clean water strategy has focused on industrial and municipal sources of pollution. They are ugly, they are smelly, and they are easy to find. In fact, the Clean Water Act has focused on about 5,000 individual pipes around the country carrying city sewage and industrial sludge.

The Act has done us all a great deal of good. It has restored 85% of industrial and municipal "point" sources up to acceptable standards. But as a glance or a sniff at this river will tell you, it is not enough. And as we look at the Anacostia, we should also consider the suffering and economic deprivation pollution causes the people of Bladensburg who live by its banks. And that should remind us all again how much we need the Environmental Justice Act.

The Clean Water Act is very good on stopping the gunk that comes out of the pipe. But the problems of the Bladensburg Marina do not come from a pipe. They come from what the scientists call "non-point source" pollution -- siltation, runoff from farms, road grime and so on, carried by rainwater into rivers, streams and lakes. And today's Clean Water Act does not adequately address non-point sources of pollution.

C
That hurts Americans, from right here in Bladensburg all the way to my home in Montana. Non-point sources cause a full 90% of my state's water pollution problems. They degrade our lakes and rivers, cost jobs by hurting our tourist industry, and make our state a little less beautiful. That is why we need a new Clean Water Act that takes on this problem. We need it this year.

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We are going to get it this year. The Clean Water Act of 1994 is going to pass. It is a common-sense, bipartisan bill. It promotes local solutions to local problems, bringing local citizens, environmentalists, farmers, business and government into the act at the very beginning.

C
With this new law, recreational fishing, boating and swimming will bring in nearly \$700 million a year. It's a rare law that promotes fly-fishing. Commercial fisheries like the ones on the Chesapeake a few miles away will see the value of their catches rise by 20 percent. Manufacturers who depend on clean water to make their products will save \$80 million a year. Even our medical bills will be lower -- reducing the risk of eating contaminated seafood will save us \$200 million a year in medical bills.

C
We need the new Clean Water Act for a lot of good reasons. We need it for the sake of the public health. We need it to create jobs. But we need the new Clean Water Act most for the simplest and best reason of all.

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Whether it is a blue ribbon Montana stream and a fish leaping in the Rocky Mountain sun; a quiet Louisiana bayou shaded by mangrove trees; white spray off the gray cliffs of the Pacific Coast; the majesty of the Chesapeake Bay; or a child playing under a fountain in a New York City park, clean water is why we call our country America the Beautiful.

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Every American wants to keep it beautiful. That is why we need a new Clean Water Act; and that is why by the end of the year, we will have one.

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