2-23-1970

Congressional Record S. 2143 - Letter to Barbara Bristol - Great Falls re: DDT - Use for Pollution

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
FEBRUARY

DEAR BARBARA: This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of January 15 in which you and your classmates raise certain questions about DDT. First, may I say that I appreciated the initiative which you have shown in looking into this particular question in trying to become more knowledgeable about it and in contacting Mr. Eddie Albert and me.

I am delighted that you have heard from Mr. Albert, and I am very happy that you took the time and the trouble to give me the benefit of your views. What you have done is a first step in the exercising of citizenship and, to me, is a very encouraging attitude on the part of your generation. You have made me more interested in DDT and other pesticides, and the uses and abuses and, most important, the fact that their abuses have reached such a stage that something must be done about them. I have gone over each letter personally, and I have compiled a list of questions from the entire class and have endeavored to answer them to the best of my abilities. The questions and answers are as follows:

1. Are you a conservationist?
   I most certainly am, and I feel that the need to face up to the problems of our environment as it affects the flora and fauna, as well as the air and the water, is long overdue.

2. What is our state doing about it?
   This is a question which I think you should ask Governor Forrest Anderson, whose address is the State Capitol, Helena, Mont.

3. Have you been trying to stop it?
   Yes, but I have not been concerned enough, though I intend to join Senator Gaylord Nelson and co-sponsor legislation which he has introduced to forbid the use of DDT so that plant and animal life will not be subject to its dangers, and, very likely, destroyed.

4. What can I do to help?
   You are helping already by showing an interest in this problem, and I would suggest that you and your classmates, friends and parents read up on this question and make your views known to your state and national legislators.

5. What are both sides of the story?
   DDT has been a very potential weapon in the extermination of mosquitoes and other pests and, thereby, has held down or eradicated certain kinds of diseases. However, on balance it seems to be more dangerous and I hope that other means can be found to replace DDT which would not be so dangerous.

6. What companies is this being sold from?
   That information I do not have at my disposal.

7. How can we make it illegal to sell it?
   By passing laws of the kind that Senator Nelson has introduced and which should receive strong Congressional support.

8. "I know you are good friends with President Nixon, so if you would get his opinions, I would be pleased." I would suggest that you write to the President directly about his opinions. My thinking is that they would be very close to mine.

9. How does it affect the birds?
   In all too many instances, it kills them.

10. If a bird has this disease and you ate the bird, would you get the disease also?
    I think there are indications that birds so contaminated can pass on to human beings certain kinds of infections.

11. What other lands use pesticides?
    Practically every civilized country in the world.

12. "I wish they would make sweatshirts looking like this about DDT." (Sent by Cynthia Coose)
    So do I!

13. Will you talk to Mr. Nixon about this problem?
    Yes, I will be glad to at the first opportunity.
    I hope that what I have said has given you the information you desire. I hope also that it indicates my great interest in this problem and greater and more intensive because of your interest and my desire to be of all possible assistance in coping with it. If you have any further questions, please feel free to write to me.

Again, I want to thank you, Barbara, for being the originator of this particular project on this particular issue and to assure you that I am indebted to you and your classmates for the interest shown.

Must close now, but with best personal wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

M. MANSFIELD

P.S.—Please rest assured that I will do my best to save the newts, sparrows, goldfish, chameleon, guinea pig and all their types and others from the danger of pesticides. I mentioned the above because some of you have told me what you have in your room.

Regards, MM
February 3, 1970

Miss Barbara Bristol
5th Grade, Riverview School C-2
100 Smelter Avenue
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Dear Barbara:

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