

SUMMARY OF PANEL DISCUSSION ON HR 14439 /S3637

In general, the panel was supportive of the efforts to enact a National Materials Policy. Some felt, however, that such a policy should be more comprehensive in order to take into account the relationship between materials, energy, and the environment. This position was held by those in "Task Force No. 1" who included a special section dealing with the proposed act in their report on "Government, Supplies, and Shortages." This section follows:

The Task Force commends the interest, imagination, and concern of the authors of these bills. We encourage the articulation of a National Materials Policy, However, recognizing the inseparable relationship between energy, environment, and materials (and the necessity of integration of relevant national objectives), we believe the objective should be the expression of the National Resources Policy, encompassing all these issues, rather than the more limited implications of the proposed act.

We find that the Bill does not, in its present form, define a Materials Policy. The major function of legislation on this subject should be to state National Policy Goals perhaps using the five elements of policy voiced by the National Commission on Materials Policy as a basis). And the responsibilities for implementation of those policy goals should be clarified. (The structure of the Energy Resources Council appears to be a useful example for executive branch authority; Congressional analogs also are needed . . . in this respect, we endorse the proposed legislation.)

The Bill focuses on materials research and development, which we recognize as an important ingredient of policy—but only one of many. We note with some surprise the omission of the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from the proposed Commission on Materials Research and Operations, and suggest that, in view of its major contribution to materials R&D, the Department of Defense should also be represented in such councils. But we would also voice some concern with the scope of the functions proposed for this Commission, which would appear, in many respects, to overlap those of existing agencies.

Concern was expressed that factors other than research and development be sufficiently woven into a National Materials Policy— to think that R&D will solve all our materials problems is "overly simplistic." Criticism was also leveled at the fact that representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Defense (which performs about 20 percent of the

Nation's materials R&D) were not included on the proposed Commission on Materials Research and Operations.

Many of these subjects were of concern to other individuals as well. One participant, in expressing his strong support for this legislative activity, reminded the other participants (as had Phil Yeager in his presentation) that it is important to consider not only what legislation may be desirable, but also what it is possible to move through the legislative process. This participant specifically referred to the fact that, although the conference participants recognize the inextricability of resources, energy, food, the environment, etc., in practice the Congress is not set up to deal with things in this way.

The general tone of "Henniker IV" was one of antipathy towards increasing Government bureaucracy, and this was reflected in many of the panelists' comments as well as in the task force report cited above. Some felt that it is now time to move on the findings and recommendations of the National Commission on Materials Policy and the National Commission on Supplies and Shortages, and that Congress should not "rehash" in hearings the work already done by these bodies. Some felt that we should "build on what we already have" in the materials area and avoid setting up another bureaucratic structure.

One panelist spoke forcefully about the need to make a national materials "policy" highly flexible. Another praised the inclusion of renewable resources within the scope of the bill, as he believed that this would open the way for some much needed discussion of their role in the materials field.

In summary, we heartily endorse the concise statement of a National Materials Policy, provided that it is in the context of the larger issue of National Resources, and that it does not add to the burden of Federal bureaucracy.