

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Edelsberg - 343-5634

For Release MARCH 6, 1965

INTERIOR REQUEST REMOVAL OF CEILING ON PESTICIDE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Department of the Interior today announced it has asked Congress for legislation which would remove the present ceiling placed on appropriations for pesticide research carried out by Federal agencies.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said the measure would implement President Johnson's recent request for increased research efforts to learn more about the effects of pesticides in the environment.

The research program, authorized in 1958, directed the Secretary of the Interior to undertake a comprehensive study of the effects of pesticides on fish and wildlife. The following year Congress voted an annual appropriation of \$2,565,000 for Interior to carry out this work. This is the present ceiling on annual pesticide research appropriations.

In his Message on Natural Beauty February 8, President Johnson told Congress, "I have asked the Secretary of the Interior to eliminate the ceiling on pesticide research."

Under this ceiling, Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting studies of the toxic effects, both acute and chronic, of pesticides on selected species of fish and wildlife.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife is developing techniques of discovering and measuring pesticide residues in the tissues and organs of fish and wildlife. It also is conducting field observations of the fish and wildlife environment before and after the spraying of pesticide chemicals.

Secretary Udall said Bureau scientists have found residues of some common pesticides in fauna collected in nearly every part of the United States.

The Secretary said increased research is needed to learn more about the possible presence of many more pesticidal materials in fish and wildlife, and the effects the chemicals have on survival, reproduction and growth of fish and wildlife.

"The acute and chronic effects resulting from exposure to combinations of such toxic agents is likewise largely unknown, although related studies have shown that one chemical may heighten the effect of another," Secretary Udall said.

While some of the residue levels of pesticides are not considered dangerous to humans, they may be well above the levels tolerated by more sensitive forms of animal life, such as fish and shellfish, the Secretary added.

Mr. Udall said expanded research is needed to determine these effects, and where they are found to be harmful, to seek substitute methods of pest control that are more selective and do not persist in the environment for prolonged periods.

x x x