

TESTIMONY OF JAMES M. BEGGS, UNDER SECRETARY, BEFORE
THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY OF THE COMMITTEE
ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES, APRIL 6, 1971.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on H. R. 4723 and a number of other bills, all directed at the serious problem of the contamination of our oceans. To my right is Rear Admiral Robert E. Hammond, Chief of the Office of Operations of the Coast Guard.

Secretary Volpe has said often that at the Department of Transportation environmental quality is a goal, not a constraint. I am pleased to be here today to explore with the Subcommittee how the Department, through the Coast Guard, can play a positive and effective role in regulating ocean dumping.

I graduated from the Naval Academy in 1948. At that time, no one questioned the capacity of the oceans to absorb our waste. We now realize, however, the peril of ocean dumping on a major scale. We now understand that we cannot continue to poison our oceans merely because they seem large enough to dilute the poison.

Administrator Ruckelshaus of the Environmental Protection Administration and Chairman Train of the Council on Environmental Quality will testify during this hearing. Both of these gentlemen will address themselves to the environmental concerns involved. I need

Effective regulation of ocean waste disposal requires three elements: a permit issuing authority, an available surveillance and enforcement capability, and effective monitoring activity. Based on the Coast Guard's considerable past experience in the field of maritime law enforcement, we believe that the agency vested with the responsibility for enforcement should have some involvement at each stage of the regulation scheme, particularly the issuance of permits. It is self evident that effective surveillance and enforcement calls for knowledge of any permits issued and the terms of those permits. H. R. 4723 makes provision for this in section 8(b), and we have already begun to discuss with the Environmental Protection Agency how we can be most useful to them and to the program.

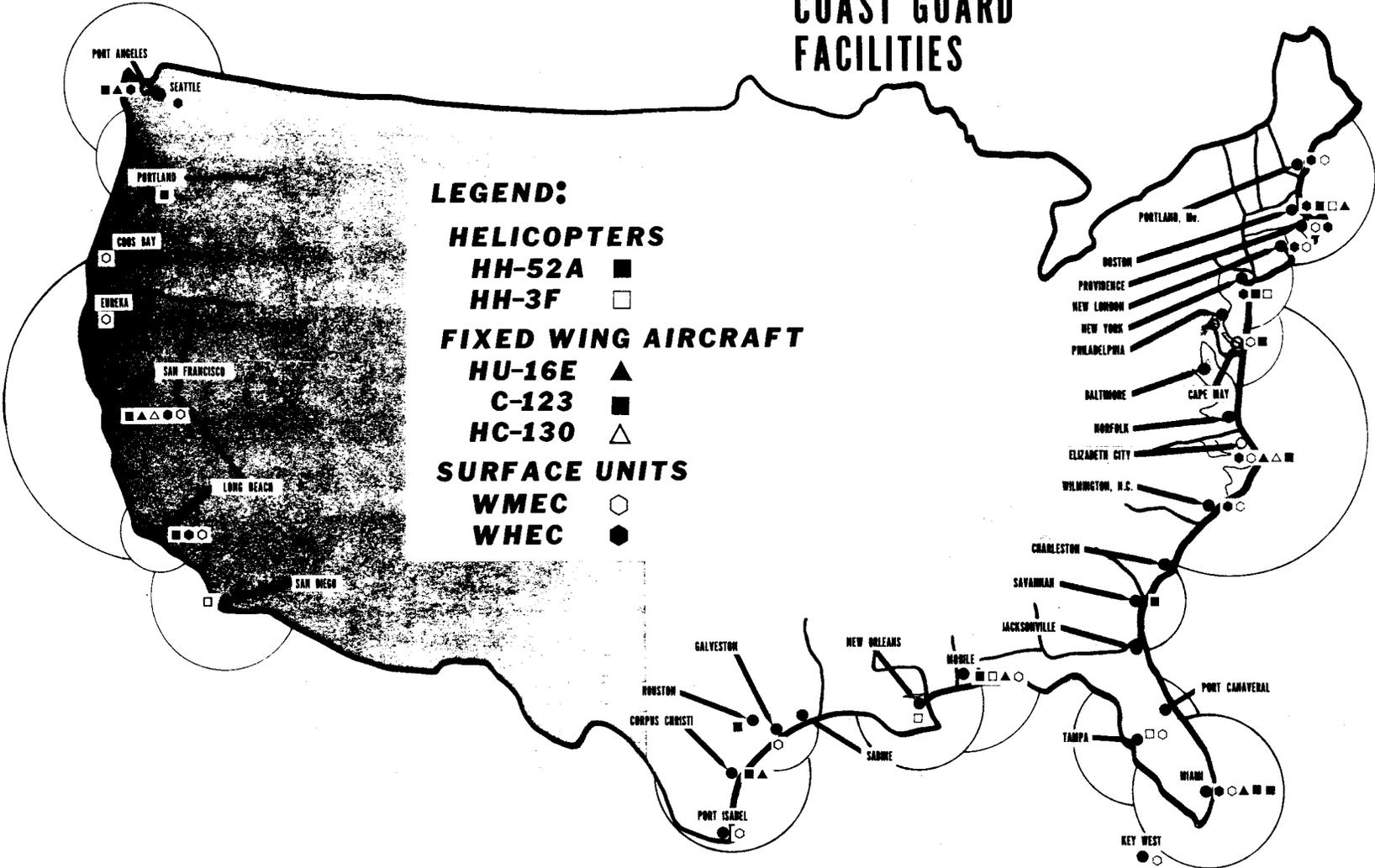
The Coast Guard engages in a variety of mission areas which would support the role of the Environmental Protection Agency in the regulation of ocean dumping. They have long been established as the Federal maritime law enforcement agency. Their officers and men are trained and experienced in matters of law enforcement just as they are trained and experienced in seamanship. The Coast Guard provides the bulk of the Federal force for enforcement of the Refuse Act and the various other oil pollution laws. They also have a long history of involvement with the marine community in such areas as the handling of dangerous cargo and the issuance of permits for various regulated marine activities. In addition, they have the facilities to carry out these

In addition, our experience and the data we have collected, in the regulation of hazardous material transport, would be readily available to assist the Environmental Protection Agency in making the necessary determinations as to whether or not particular substance should be disposed of at sea. The Coast Guard also collects oceanographic data in support of other missions which, while presently limited in scope, could be utilized in baseline determination.

Captains of the Port and Port Safety Officers have small boats, ranging from 31 to 44 feet, at their disposal for a variety of tasks including the supervision of loading of material to be dumped at sea and other calm water surveillance and monitoring. Eighty-two and 95 foot patrol boats are also available for the same tasks. Medium and high endurance cutters can be utilized too, and these vessels are capable of long range operations of extended duration. Finally, Coast Guard helicopters and fixed wing aircraft can respond in less than one hour for surveillance and other duties.

If requested, we could also aid the Environmental Protection Agency in oceanographic monitoring of dump sites and adjacent waters. The Coast Guard has, for several years, been a major participant in the United States oceanography program. This participation takes the form of daily observations from lightships and offshore light stations

MAJOR COAST GUARD FACILITIES



LOCATION OF COAST GUARD COTP/MIO

