

STATEMENT BY CONG. PAUL TSONGAS
JUNE 24, 1977

IT IS A GREAT HONOR TO SPEAK TODAY AT THE DEDICATION OF THE GREATER LAWRENCE SANITARY DISTRICT WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY. THIS WATER TREATMENT PLANT HOLDS A MONUMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR OUR INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY, NOT ONLY IN AN IMMEDIATE AND TANGIBLE WAY -- THE CLEANSING OF UP TO 52 MILLION GALLONS OF RIVER WATER PER DAY -- BUT ALSO IN A DEEP AND LASTING WAY AS EVIDENCED IN THE IMPACT A CLEAN MERRIMACK RIVER WILL HAVE ON THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES. THE SELFLESS COOPERATION OF THE FOUR COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT (LAWRENCE, METHUEN, NORTH ANDOVER, AND ANDOVER) CONSTITUTES A MAJOR STEP TOWARD THE RECAPTURE OF A CIVILIZED WAY OF LIFE SO EASILY LOST IN THE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY'S TRADE-OFF OF RESOURCES FOR PROGRESS.

IN THE 10 YEARS OF PLANNING FOR THE GREATER LAWRENCE WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY, THE MERRIMACK RIVER HAS HELD A PLACE AMONG THE 10 MOST POLLUTED RIVERS IN THE COUNTRY. WHEN THE PLANT IS OPERABLE AT FULL CAPACITY AND THE RIVER NETWORK OF PLANTS IS FINALLY COORDINATED, THE MERRIMACK RIVER WILL BE ONE OF CLEANEST RIVERS IN THE COUNTRY. PRESENTLY, SMALLER TREATMENT FACILITIES DOWNSTREAM IN HAVERHILL AND NEWBURYPORT ARE ON LINE; UPSTREAM, THE LOWELL FACILITY IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION; FACILITIES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE ARE STILL IN THE PLANNING STAGES. THE GREATER LAWRENCE FACILITY WILL EVENTUALLY PROCESS 52 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER A DAY; PRESENTLY, THE PLANT PROCESSES APPROXIMATELY 24 MILLION GALLONS OF RIVER WATER AND IS 99 PERCENT CONNECTED TO PROCESSING SEWAGE FROM GREATER LAWRENCE, THEREBY BLOCKING THE

PASSAGE OF WATER WASTE MATERIALS INTO THE MERRIMACK RIVER. IT IS PROJECTED THAT THE IMPACT OF THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT MAY BE SEEN AS EARLY AS THE SUMMER OF 1978, WHEN BOATING AND SWIMMING WILL BE POSSIBLE IN THE DOWNSTREAM PARTS OF THE MERRIMACK, I.E. IN HAVERHILL AND NEWBURYPORT.

IN OUR RUSH TOWARD PROGRESS, WE HAVE TOO LONG BELIEVED THAT DEVELOPMENT IN AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY SHOULD BE ACHIEVED AT ANY COST, WITHOUT REGARD TO THE ABUSES WE MIGHT INFLICT UPON OUR ENVIRONMENT. WE ARE ONLY NOW REALIZING THAT OUR TRUE WEALTH IS OUR NATURAL RESOURCES, AND POSSIBLY THE MOST CRUCIAL OF THESE RESOURCES IS OUR WATER. WATER IS THE DOMINANT ELEMENT OF CLIMATE, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PLANT GROWTH, AND IS CRUCIAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE. THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED AGRICULTURAL LOSS AND PERSONAL HARDSHIP IN THE WESTERN PART OF OUR OWN COUNTRY FROM SEVERE DROUGHT MAY BE THE FIRST IN OUR NATION TO REALIZE THAT OUR RESOURCES ARE CRITICALLY LIMITED WHILE OUR GROWTH AS A PEOPLE IS NOT.

URBAN COMMUNITIES SOONER OR LATER MUST MAKE A CHOICE BETWEEN CONTINUED RESOURCE ABUSE OR SURVIVAL. WE CANNOT, FOR EXAMPLE, ASSUME THAT THE SUPPLY OF OUR DRINKING WATER IS UNLIMITED WHEN THE INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION AND SEWAGE WE DEPOSIT DAILY IN OUR WATER RESERVES IS EQUALLY UNLIMITED. WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT OUR SUPPLY OF FOSSIL FUELS IS UNLIMITED WHEN OUR RECKLESS CONSUMPTION OF ENERGY IS EQUALLY UNLIMITED. WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT OUR BREATHABLE AIR IS UNLIMITED WHEN THE

NOXIOUS FUMES WE RELEASE DAILY FROM CARS AND FACTORIES IS UNLIMITED. THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT A SOCIETY WHICH EQUATES DEVELOPMENT WITH RESOURCE ABUSE IS A DEAD SOCIETY; A SOCIETY WHICH TAKES NO CARE IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT ACHIEVES "PROGRESS" HAS NO FUTURE; A SOCIETY WHICH TURNS A STERLING RESOURCE INTO A SEWER IS NOT A CIVILIZED SOCIETY. THE WAVE OF PROGRESS IS, FOR US, NOT THE CONTINUATION OF RESOURCE ABUSE BUT THE RECAPTURE OF OUR RESOURCES AND OUR CIVILIZATION.

THE GREATER LAWRENCE SANITARY DISTRICT WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY IS DEDICATED TODAY TO THE 150,000 RESIDENTS OF LAWRENCE, METHUEN, ANDOVER, AND NORTH ANDOVER. IT IS A TWENTIETH CENTURY PROJECT WITH TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY IMPLICATIONS. THE CLEANING UP OF OUR RIVER WILL MEAN A REBIRTH OF OUR COMMUNITY. GREATER LAWRENCE CAN ONCE AGAIN DERIVE PLEASURE, RECREATION, PROFIT, AND A SENSE OF COMMUNITY FROM THE GREAT WATERWAY THAT CONNECTS ITS TOWNS.

THE STEP WE TAKE IN THE DEDICATION OF THIS FACILITY IS VERY POSITIVE. WE ARE TODAY PLEDGING THAT WE WILL COME TO TERMS WITH OUR LIMITATIONS AND OUR ENVIRONMENT AND THAT WE WILL MOVE IN A CONSCIOUS AND DECISIVE WAY TOWARDS CIVILIZATION, AND INEVITABLY, SURVIVAL.