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For Release: JULY 1, 1971, THURSDAY

THE GROWING CRISIS IN NATURAL RESOURCES

By U.S. Senator Bob Dole

WASHINGTON, D.C.

As Americans have become more alert to the need to clean up our physical environment, we have also become distinctly aware of the need to budget the use of our steadily depleting natural resources. The double-edged problem of resource depletion and environmental pollution poses a continuing challenge to man's inventiveness in minimizing these undesirable results while serving an ever expanding population.

Although we as a nation are only 5.7 per cent of the world's population, we consume 40 per cent of the earth's natural resources, including nonrenewable minerals and timber. A crisis in natural resources is growing, because man is spending his mineral capital faster than any other resource.

One area which is gaining support among environmentalists is that of reusing materials that have already been used; and paper recycling of major interest. Experts say that recycling of paper wastes could solve about 80 per cent of the nation's trash problem, and each ton of paper recycled would mean 17 trees saved from the axe. Reuse of only half the annual volume of waste paper would reduce by 30 million cords the annual consumption of wood resources. This is equivalent to 2½ times the present annual production of the four leading timber producing states.

As the nation's largest single purchaser and user of paper products, the federal government should take the lead by actually making a policy of using recycled materials for its own specifications. To encourage this policy, I cosponsored recently two bills that direct all Federal agencies and purchasing departments to require the maximum use of all

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recycled paper. The legislation requires agencies to study the use of all recycled materials for procurement.

The first bill authorizes and directs the General Services Administration and Defense Supply Agency to insure that procurement and use by the Federal Government of products manufactured from recycled materials. It would require both agencies to jointly conduct a full study of which products and materials procured or used by the departments, agencies or instrumentalities of the Federal Government could be required to have as a part of their composition, recycled material while meeting the use specifications of such organizations.

The second bill authorizes and directs the General Services Administration to prescribe regulations with respect to the amount of recycled material contained in paper procured or used by the Federal Government or the District of Columbia. The suggested regulations specify that the contents of such paper consist of as great an amount of recycled material as possible consistent with the purpose for which such paper was procured.

The Joint Committee on Printing and the General Services Administration are presently studying their specifications, but a Congressional mandate would make clear the American public's demand for action. I am hopeful that the legislation I have cosponsored will serve as an impetus to municipalities, states, private corporations and institutions to create a market for recycled materials.