

7

June 7, 1953

232 St. Matthews St.,
Green Bay, Wis.

Mr. Wm. Voigt Jr.,
Executive Sec., IWLA
31 N. State St.,
Chicago, Ill.

1953

Dear Bill,

I just learned today, when I arrived home from B.C. and points west, that I had been chosen to be a National Director of the League.

I feel very highly honored and hope I can justify the faith placed in me. At least I will try to be of service to the organization.

I have so many things to do after my return, so this will be only a note.

Thanking you for your letter of notification, I remain,

Yours, very truly,


V.J. Muench

June 12, 1954

232 St. Matthews St.,
Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Hon. Walter Kohler,
Governor,
Madison, Wisconsin.

Dear Governor Kohler,

I have recently read that the Menomonee Indians will soon be given the status of citizens. Very likely this will mean that the reservation lands will be turned over to them individually in fee.

The Indians being human, and so long exposed to the white man's idea of civilization, I am wondering if it will mean the doom of the forests in the reservation. Under the excellent management of the government, with the policy of selective cutting employed, a perpetual harvest of timber was assured and all the natural beauty and recreational values preserved.

As a result of this policy, the reservation attained nation wide fame and tourists from every state came to enjoy its beauty and aesthetic values. Thus it was an irreplaceable asset not only to the people of the State but particularly to the Indians and the people of the surrounding areas. True, fishing and hunting were prohibited to white men, but even so the area was so unique it attracted the people from all over the country.

I believe the experience of the past justifies us in assuming the Indians will sell these lands to get as much as they can under the white man's philosophy of "take all you can today and to hell with tomorrow." If that happens it will be a staggering loss to the people for all time to come.

I see no way in which this wonderful area can be preserved unless the State of Wisconsin acquires the most important sections of the reservation for State Park purposes and then adopts a perpetual timber harvest policy such as presently exists. Or, unless the Government acquires it as a National park. I believe this matter is so important that thought should be given now to solving the problem before it is too late. Perhaps a board should be set up at once to study the matter and attempt to find a solution.

Hoping you will see fit to set the wheels in motion to preserve this area for the future, and with kindest regards, I remain,

Yours very truly,

CC: Hon. John Byrnes
U.S. Congressman
Mrs. E. LaBudde

V. J. Muench

RECEIVED
JUN 14 1954
IZAAK WALTON
LEAGUE

V. J. MUENCH
ATTORNEY AT LAW
232 ST. MATTHEWS STREET
GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

TEL. HENLOCK 2-5088

November 5, 1965

Hon. Warren P. Knowles
Governor
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Governor Knowles:

I want to thank you for the opportunity given me to attend your conferences on Water Resources management at Madison and on Natural Beauty at Waukesha held this past October. These conferences were timely, not only because of the seriousness of the problems presented, but also because they afforded responsible and concerned citizens an opportunity to discuss and learn more about them.

Having been engaged in conservation work on a voluntary basis for many years as a former president of the State Division of the Izaak Walton League, as one of the authors of the law under which the present Committee on Water Pollution is operating, as one who helped initiate the Fox River and Green Bay hearings in the late 40's and early 50's, as the plaintiff in the Namekagon case, and as a member of a legislative interim committee which made a study of Wisconsin Water laws, I feel I have a background which qualifies me to offer the suggestions and criticisms contained in this letter, particularly as to water pollution.

I am prompted to write this letter because over the years, I have attended many conferences covering the same subjects discussed at Madison and Waukesha. I dare say that at all of them the same sincerity and purpose prevailed. I can also say that perhaps 99% of the ideas we heard expressed at these conferences have also been expressed time and time again at other conservation meetings. Now, little real progress can be made toward the solution of the problems involved if at meeting after meeting we hear the speeches but fail to transform and translate them into effective action. The proof that we have largely failed in the past is the fact of the alarmingly rapid growth of the very same problems year after year and your recognition of need for calling these conferences to try and solve them.

The solution of many of these problems will take long range planning and programs costing great sums of money. But there are some of them which cannot wait for long range planning and solutions or we will be overwhelmed by them before they can be solved. Fortunately, we can attack many of the most serious of these effectively now, with the weapons we already have and without the immediate expenditure of vast sums of additional money.

At the water resource conference it was suggested that Wisconsin had done a fine job in water pollution abatement and that our State was far ahead of many of our neighbor states. The fact is we have not done a "good job" for

we are losing ground as evidenced by the year by year increase in pollution of Green Bay and Lake Michigan. Furthermore, if we were doing a good job in pollution abatement there would be no reason to call a conference involving the pollution problem. We would be winning and not losing. Nor is there any comfort in knowing, relatively speaking, that while other states might be up to their necks in pollution and we are only up to our knees, it is just a matter of time when we will also be up to our necks in it at the speed with which we are losing the battle.

Some of the things we can do NOW are the following:

(1) The Common Law riparian rights doctrine, along with the Trust doctrine and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 concept relating to navigable waters must be protected against any and all of the continuing attempts to modify or change them. This protection is needed for without it these waters would long ago have been divided amongst competing interests, so that today there would be no public waters and in fact, no waters left for modern special interests to try and divide amongst themselves.

(2) We must make more effective use of the laws and pollution agencies we now have, and obtain better laws in the areas where they are needed.

For example: The storm and sanitary sewer separation problem is one of the most serious in the state. It is also one of the most costly to correct and it is becoming costlier day by day. We are not now, and have not been attacking this problem over the years as diligently and effectively as it could be attacked with the weapons we already have. Let us look at the situation as it exists and has existed in Green Bay, and this is typical of the lack of system which exists in communities all over the state. Some ten or twelve years ago, the stench from the East River became so unbearable to the residents in the area that a meeting with members of the pollution committee and city officials was held in Green Bay. It was determined that among other causes of the stench and polluted condition of the river, was the raw sewage entering it through the combined storm and sanitary sewage system of the area. It was determined that the complete storm and sanitary sewer separation program for the City of Green Bay would take about 15 years and cost about \$10,000,000.00. For at least that period of time the City of Green Bay has been under orders from the Pollution Committee to "continue its program of storm and sanitary sewer separation." For some years work of separation was done, so that now apparently all sewers entering into the East River have been separated. In the spring of 1965, as a result of complaints by people on the East shore of Green Bay as to the increasing pollution of that area, the District office of the State Board of Health in Green Bay was visited. Inquiry was made of the district health officer as to the status of the storm and sanitary sewage separation program of the City of Green Bay. He didn't have knowledge of the work being done

on that program in the city, nor did he have a record of the year by year progress of the program. He did, however, know that the entire downtown area of the City of Green Bay, both on the east and west sides of the Fox River were still un-separated. He had no information on separation programs of other communities along the Fox River, all of whom are contributing to the polluted condition of the Bay, except he did know that the City of Appleton was engaged in a huge separation program this year because "the streets of the city were all torn up." It was then suggested to him, in view of the handicap this agency is under for lack of staff, that each community could supply the health office of the state with a map showing what portion of each community still remains un-separated, the work done in previous years and the work to be done in the current year, with different colors designating each. He thought this was an excellent idea and should be passed along to the State Board of Health. Inquiry was also made as to how the pollution committee knew what was going on in this field of pollution abatement if the district office didn't know. This suggestion about the maps along with an inquiry of how the pollution committee could keep track of storm and sewer separation work over the state if the district officers didn't know, was sent to Mr. Wisniewski of the State Committee on water pollution. He replied saying the map idea was a good one, and that he would pass it on, and that he kept track of storm and sanitary sewer separation work year by year by noting the contracts let for this purpose in a periodical which he receives. In October of 1965, inquiry was again made at the district office of the State Board of Health in Green Bay, about the status of the separation program, but the office had no more information than it had at the spring inquiry and had received no information about the map suggestion.

We know, of course, that no new areas in a city are permitted to install un-separated storm and sanitary sewers. We know, too, that with the rapid growth of urban areas vast sums of money are needed for the installation of the separated systems in these new areas. But we also know that it is the old sources of sewage infection along with the new loads placed on municipal sewage plants by reason of new urban connections which tend to increase the total pollution load of a receiving body of water. These old sources of infection, coupled with the new loads, must finally destroy the receiving bodies of water no matter how many new separated systems are installed in new areas served by a sewage plant, even if that plant is kept at maximum operating efficiency.

This calls for an immediate review of the method under which the old storm and sanitary separation problems are being handled. A completion program schedule with time limitations on completion must be worked out with each community having such problems. Each such community must be ordered to do a certain and reasonable amount of work for separation each year until the job is finally done. There need not be intolerable financial demands for this work made on any community so long as some amount of work is done each year according to schedule. Such an efficient and objective program would have saved the

taxpayers vast sums of money had it been in force over the years since costs for such work rise year by year. Had the 15 year program for Green Bay been faithfully followed, the job would probably now be completed and the failure to follow it through means that it will likely take another 15 years to complete it. Furthermore, if the work of separating the old areas in Green Bay moves with no more efficiency, control or rapidity than it has since the original orders were issued, the separation problem could go on indefinitely and this is true for areas all over the state. A sound program of correction can and must be inaugurated at once, and such an efficient and effective program does not need huge additional sums to the Board of Health, although some additional staffing might be needed.

(3) New and more effective laws are needed to handle and correct the serious septic tank problem. The septic tank problem has become one of the major sources of pollution not only in rural areas but also along the shores of Green Bay and every inland lake where cottage development has taken place. The State Board of Health, under present laws, is completely helpless to handle the problem. Under the local health officer laws we now have, the problem has gotten entirely out of hand. The local health officer setup must be changed with the authority vested either in county units under supervision of the State Board of Health or a new branch of the State Board of Health must be created to handle the problem. No doubt the State Board of Health itself could make the best recommendations for the new laws needed to correct the situation.

(4) Strict control over use and marketing of non-degradeable insecticides must be obtained through legislation without delay. The problem has become so great and the effects of indiscriminate use of such poisons are so well known, there is no need to elaborate upon them here. When these poisons get into waterways, they do incalculable damage.

(5) The Great Lakes are now becoming increasingly important as sources of drinking water as well as for recreation. The tremendous increase in Great Lakes shipping along with pleasure boating means that hundreds of thousands of people as passengers and crews are using the Great Lakes as open sewers and such use along with the garbage they dispose of in open waters is, by itself, a major source of water pollution in the Great Lakes. This pollution source can largely be controlled and needs no long range planning for its elimination. Government boats as well as privately owned boats should have the necessary equipment aboard to handle this problem. The question of cost will be raised but the ultimate cost of failure to install such equipment will be far greater than the cost of immediate installation. Here, too, laws should be enacted at once to correct the problem. This is another area where "long range planning" will be too late.

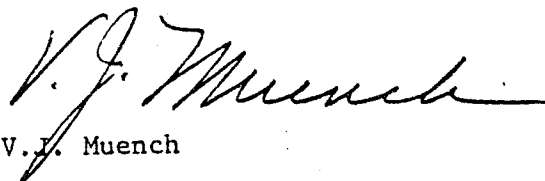
(6) One of the threats used by industry in some pollution abatement efforts has been that "strict enforcement of pollution orders, and laws which make greater demands for abatement than exist in other states, would make it impossible for such industries to compete with similar industries in less demanding states and, therefore, would result in the need to move from this state to the less demanding ones." Since industry cannot or apparently will not correct this situation by setting up and enforcing its own standards relating to pollution abatement, then there appears to be no alternative but to have the Federal

November 5, 1965

Government set up nation wide standards for each industry. This would eliminate the hesitation of state pollution agencies to enforce pollution orders because it would remove the "club" some industries have threatened to use.

I want to repeat, my object in writing this letter is to try and bring home to the proper authorities that while so many of our problems in pollution abatement appear to be huge and overwhelming, requiring new and more effective laws and long range planning, nevertheless, we must start winning this pollution battle NOW with the weapons we already have. All we need is a little more imagination, resourcefulness, dedication and initiative in existing agencies. New and stronger laws where needed are imperative, but will hardly be the answer by themselves. They, too, will need the imagination, resourcefulness, dedication and initiative needed to make our existing laws effective.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "V. J. Muench". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

V. J. Muench

232 St. Matthews St.,
Green Bay, Wis. 54301

Dec. 18, 1970.

Hon. Patrick J. Lucey,
Governor-Elect
Capitol Bldg.,
Madison, Wis. 53702.

Dear Mr. Lucey,

I regret I did not attend your informative budget hearing on environmental matters at Green Bay this week.

For more than two decades I have attended hearings, conferences, meetings and conventions concerning water pollution and environmental problems. During that period, I also fought for better environmental legislation, stricter enforcement thereof and against the most insidious problem of all-, public apathy.

The appalling continuous deterioration of the total environment in this State is sufficient proof that past efforts in environmental protection have been inadequate, - that a large percentage of the sums claimed by industry to have been spent on pollution abatement has been ineffective to a large degree; that the most efficient pollution abatement technical knowledge has not been fully employed by industry or municipalities; ~~and~~, and that many so called compliances with abatement orders have been nothing more than mere token ones. We can only conjecture as to the roll political influences have played in the total abatement picture.

Had I attended the conference I, likely, would have elaborated on the above statements and that would have been merely a time consuming repetition of the things I have been saying for so many years. However, after reading the story about the hearing in the December 16th issue of the Green Bay Press Gazette and noting the use of the same negative arguments as to "why" we cannot or should not achieve higher standards of pollution abatement, I feel impelled to submit this statement, in the hope it might be of some constructive use to you and your staff in your efforts to cope with the environmental problems.

In reading the article it occurred to me, should we continue

to give validity to the negative arguments of industry, as we have been doing by accepting them, then, we are actually sanctioning the ultimate destruction of the industrial age and the suicide of the human race. While, at first glance this might sound like a wild, irresponsible statement, nevertheless, if we have the honesty and courage to examine all the basic causes for environmental deterioration and the pollution problems as they already exist, we must conclude that we must change our course or be engulfed by the waves of our own environmental irresponsibility. We must carefully examine as well our motivating economic creed that growth in all areas such as population, industrial, land development and economic, is as rational as we want to believe it is. Obviously, since our basic life giving resources of water, air, soil and minerals are limited, somewhere we must reach a saturation point, and who can say when that point will be reached, or what will happen when it is reached.

Perhaps this logic is too simple to be accepted by the sophistication of a technological/^{age} which apparently is willing to ignore the impact of an environmental deterioration already so pronounced as to be perceived by our physical senses. Or, perhaps more realistically, this impact is being ignored because we refuse to abandon the worship of the god we created, the "golden god" of the industrial age called "unlimited growth and expansion", even tho that god has already clearly proven itself to be fraudulent as evidenced in the decay and massive problems of our urban areas. Can this society continue to worship a/^{such} god when all the environmental sacrifices we make on his altar are never sufficient to satisfy his unsatiabable appetite for more people, more taxes, more costs, more inflation, more deficits, more debts and more government insolvency? Can any nation, any form of government or any economic system drown itself in the wastes of it's own affluence and still live?

Industry claims it cannot effectively abate pollution because the costs of such abatement would threaten the existence of the industry, prevent it's growth and expansion and endanger the jobs of many people thus threatening the economy of the area where it is located. These claims are a "big stick" and are used effectively. It is a very serious matter to any employee to face the threat of losing his livelihood. It is a very serious matter to curtail or end payrolls in any community.

But industry never mentions the other side of the coin. It uses a public resource and depends on it for its very existence. Often in its use of that resource, it destroys it for many other legitimate uses. It never mentions that too often it has built plants without first fully weighing the environmental impact of its venture, while later claiming immunity from the damage of its environmental irresponsibility with the loss of jobs argument. If this argument has merit, then it could also be used by the fire engine manufacturer who might claim justification for burning down public buildings in order to keep the factory workers jobs and the local firemen employed.

Industry could make great contributions to curb pollution. For example, it could police its own ranks, set up its own standards and see that these standards were rigidly adhered to even tho it might mean phasing out the old inefficient operations in its ranks. Is there any legitimate reason why the public should subsidize such old plants where proper pollution abatement facilities are too costly to install? And, the public does in effect subsidize such plants thru the additional burden they place upon the public resources.

If unable to so police itself, it could at least wholeheartedly co-operate with government to obtain the needed laws to obtain universal standards thruout the land. Such laws would eliminate the unfair competitive claims industry uses to drag its feet in pollution abatement. It might in the end be cheaper to co-operate than to spend huge sums in public relations, political pressures or coercion to prevent such co-operation for pollution abatement.

It is not enough for the people of the State to furnish the funds requested by the agencies charged with the responsibility of protecting the environment. There has always been the cry for more money to do the job. But, money alone will never do the job. It will require not only the dedication of the employees of the agencies but also a degree of departmental efficiency and co-operation that now appears to be glaringly lacking. The difficulty of getting things done efficiently and effectively has always been one of costly factors in the administration of pollution abatement. Just try to make a ^{complaint} /on a pollution problem in any locality of the State and find out how many hands it must pass

thru and how much "buck passing" occurs before action is taken.

Public hearings on water pollution problems are essential. However, many policies used in the past have been needlessly costly to the public. It is expensive to obtain the necessary biological, scientific and ecological data needed for such hearings, and then to issue orders on the basis of the findings. The record over a long number of years shows that in many instances orders so issued have been extended year after year after year, often overlapping into a new hearing called on the same waterway. The new hearing will then confirm what has been known all along, - that the waterway is polluted, the polluters identified (generally the same ones), while new orders are issued only to again be extended year after year. I am sure much taxpayers expense could be saved with more effective pollution order enforcement. Heavier fines for polluters would also reduce the total cost of pollution enforcement.

Not only are new and more efficient municipal sewage plants needed, but more control must be exercised over existing plants to insure their operation at their highest efficiency capabilities. County sanitary zoning and septic tank regulations must be strictly enforced. There is nothing more worthless to the public interest than unenforced sanitary and zoning ordinances.

The massiveness of the total pollution problem was illustrated by some of the articles contained in the same Dec. 16th issue of the Press Gazette. Some of the headlines were, "Power Plants Oppose Tougher A-Plant Rules"; "Judge O.K.'s Further Dumping Of Taconite"; "Sued Cities To Resist Sewage Suit"; "Action Taken By Wyandotte On Mercury"; "SST Backers Say Filibuster to Block Bills", and a letter in the Peoples Forum saying in effect that it was more important to continue polluting the Oconto river than to clean it up.

One cannot read these articles without asking "why" the continuing conflict between the forces which recognize the devastating impact of certain man made activities on mother earth and those who refuse to acknowledge them. The "Why" appears to be one common denominator running thru all these news item, namely, "short term economic benefits vs. long term environmental costs". The same conflict will determine the destiny

of the waters of Green Bay, Lake Michigan and all the rest of our water resources and quality natural environment. Unfortunately, no one can prove that "long term" means five years, fifty years or a hundred years. However, when we consider that the present degree of environmental deterioration has been caused by the impact of a population of 200,000,000 million people and their GNP, it becomes rather frightening to try and calculate the impact of the predicted population of 300,000,000 by the year 2000. It seems quite clear, unless something drastic and effective is done, to decelerate the present speed of environmental deterioration, the basic elements for life of air, water, soils and minerals could well be impaired to the point where life could no longer be supported. It seems to me it should be one of the prime goals of government to prevent such disaster to occur, and there ought to be no "belly" oriented values strong enough to deter government from reaching that goal.

Respectfully submitted,

Yours very truly,

V. J. Muench

232 St. Matthews St.,
Green Bay, Wis. 54301.

3/3/71.

Director (Att. 320)
Bureau of Land Management,
U.S. Dept. Of Interior,
Washington, D.C. 20240.

Dear Sir,

Please include this statement in the Alaska pipeline record.

The significance of the fundamental issues involved in the hearing for the proposed Alaskan pipeline transcend even the issue of the pipeline itself. The question is, simply, -" do we continue to yield to those values which place immediate economic benefits ahead of long range environmental costs?"

The impact of the immediate economic gain doctrine on mankind and his environment has already reached devastating proportions. We can see it, feel it, smell it and taste it. Much of the unrest, insecurity and uncertainty of the people can be traced directly or indirectly as some of the by products ensuing therefrom. To be indifferent to what man is doing to create these problems would be to indict man as being so ethically corrupt, so intellectually blind and so morally bankrupt of his responsibilities to mankind as to be unperturbed at the eroded fields, the strip mined wastes, the devastated forests, the polluted waters, the poisoned air and the increasing demands on the earth's resources by an exploding population. The value of immediate gain values must be weighed against these things.

Man has now reached a stage in this industrial age where his growth and expansion have reached a point where he can no longer rationalize his justification for inflicting mortal wounds on his environment in the name of immediate economic gains, or "progress". He can no longer proceed to "develop" a resource on the grounds that he now possesses the technology to do it profitably. His reliance on technology can be fatal- it does not breathe, cannot reproduce nor possess emotions. We dare not worship it as a god upon whose altar must be ~~fed~~ ^{sacrificed} every environmental resource to feed it's insatiable demand for more and more economic immediate gain values. Technology is a useful force when it performs it's role as a servant of man, but it becomes a deadly destructive one when it becomes his master. For example,


assume that technology makes it possible for the pipe line to bring the oil to the markets. It would thus be creating an artificial growth and economic prosperity, which generally means more people and more of all the good and bad that goes with it. What happens to this artificial growth and prosperity when the oil is gone? Besides the destruction of an Eskimo and Indian culture which was able to live in harmony with its environment, it is bound to leave a devastating impact not only upon the wildlife and ecosystem but upon untold populations because the artificial stimuli which created the immediate prosperity has vanished.

To greedily pursue the doctrine which places immediate economic gain values, ^{dominant} such as the proposed pipeline will do, is to place man in the category of a deadly cancer growing, spreading and expanding until it kills itself by destroying its victim.

The final determination of all of the values involved in an issue such as the pipe line might well be the key to the survival of man and the industrial age.

We hope the long range total environmental values so vital to the well being of man, will prevail, and the pipe line will be denied.

Yours very truly,


V.J. Muench.

CC; S.M.Brandborg
W.L.Tupling
F.Fickelsen
C. Carroll
A. Taylor
E. Stahr
P.R.Van Gytenbeek
P. Lukens
J.Penfold
C. Hunter