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HONORING THE LIFE OF CHARLES  
HATCH STODDARD

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 1998

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my condolences to the family of Charles Hatch Stoddard, a former and courageous Interior Department official who made a significant contribution to the quality of life of his fellow Minnesotans and all Americans.

In the late 1960's Mr. Stoddard, then a top regional official at the U.S. Department of the Interior, coordinated a study of taconite wastes that a company was dumping into Lake Superior. He found that these asbestos fibers were harmful to human health, but was savagely attacked by opponents who claimed his report was biased and unsubstantiated. Stoddard's health findings, however, were ultimately upheld by federal courts and applauded by the Secretary of the Interior and all the public.

Mr. Stoddard served the United States in several other respects. He was a Naval Reserve officer in World War II, worked as an

employee of the U.S. Forest Service, and held such important posts as Assistant Secretary and director of the Bureau of Land Management.

He was also a highly acclaimed conservationist, one of our nation's most effective environmentalists, spending a year as President of the Wilderness Society.

I have attached Mr. Stoddard's obituary from the Minneapolis Star Tribune for my colleagues' review. It highlights his courage in bringing to the public's attention a matter that was crucial to their health and the health of their children in Minnesota and was repeated many times. The values and integrity that guided his decision and work reflect well upon the purpose of public service and the impact a good man can make.

I applaud Mr. Stoddard and present his model of courage yesterday as a benchmark for the environmentalists and policy making for citizens today and tomorrow.

[From the Star Tribune, Dec. 30, 1997]

CHARLES STODDARD DIES; HE PLAYED KEY  
ROLE IN RESERVE MINING CASE

A CONTROVERSIAL 1968 INTERIOR DEPARTMENT  
STUDY HE HEADED SAID TACONITE TAILINGS  
WERE POLLUTING LAKE SUPERIOR

(By Dean Rebuffoni)

Charles Hatch Stoddard was a besieged man 29 years ago.

As a top regional official of the U.S. Interior Department, Stoddard, who died Thursday at 85, had coordinated a major federal study on the taconite wastes that Reserve Mining Co. of Silver Bay, Minn., was dumping into Lake Superior.

Although the study had just been completed, it hadn't been released to the public.

However, Stoddard had provided copies to Reserve, which quickly went over his head to Interior Secretary Stewart Udall.

The company urged Udall not to release the study, arguing that it was riddled with errors. Some critics suggested that Stoddard, a Democratic political appointee and longtime conservationist, was biased against Reserve.

Reporters were constantly calling Stoddard's office in Duluth, seeking information about the study.

Also, Stoddard knew that he'd have to resign soon from his federal post: Richard Nixon, a Republican with strong political ties to Reserve, was about to be inaugurated as president.

So Stoddard decided to release the study without Udall's approval.

On Jan. 16, 1969, the biggest headline on the front page of the Minneapolis Tribune read: "U.S. Study Finds Taconite Tailings Pollute Superior."

The study, which quickly became known as "the Stoddard Report," made him a hero among conservationists.

Udall, however, told Congress that the study was "a preliminary staff report," a statement that Reserve repeatedly cited in its effort to discredit it.

The study also was attacked by U.S. Rep. John Blatnik, a Duluth Democrat who called it a preliminary report with no official status.

Ultimately, Stoddard was vindicated by the federal courts, which ruled that Reserve was polluting Lake Superior with potentially injurious asbestos-type fibers.

Reserve was fined more than \$1 million and shifted its taconite wastes to an onland disposal site.

Udall eventually retracted his statement, telling the New York Times that the study was an official Interior Department report.

He said his original discrediting of it was prompted by concerns raised by Blatnik, who in 1969 was a powerful politician whose support on many issues was needed by the Interior Department. Blatnik died in 1991.

Udall's recanting also was vindication for Stoddard, who died Thursday at a nursing home in Spooner, Wis. He had suffered from Parkinson's disease for several years.

"Chuck Stoddard was a fearless public servant," said Grant Merritt, a Minnesota conservationist who played a key role in the campaign to end Reserve's discharge into Lake Superior.

"Chuck did his job regardless of the heat he had to take," Merritt said. "The Stoddard Report gave us the scientific basis we needed to seek on-land disposal of Reserve's tailings."

Stoddard was born in Milwaukee in 1912 and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in forestry from the University of Michigan in the 1930s. He later did graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin and at Princeton.

He was a Naval Reserve officer during World War II, and while serving in the South Pacific, he discovered a species of tropical tree that later was named after him: *Mastixiodendron stoddardii*.

He had several stints as a federal employee specializing in conservation issues, including work as a U.S. Forest Service economist in the 1930s.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, he was a private forestry consultant in Minnesota and Wisconsin and was active in several conservation groups.

From 1955 to 1961, he worked for Resources for the Future, a nonprofit conservation research organization based in Washington, D.C.

Stoddard also was involved in Democratic Party politics, and during the 1960 presidential campaign, he worked first for candidate Hubert Humphrey, then as an adviser to John F. Kennedy on conservation issues.

After Kennedy was elected, Stoddard was named an assistant secretary of the Interior Department and, later, was appointed director of the Bureau of Land Management.

After retiring from federal employment, he served for a year as president of the Wilderness Society.

He wrote numerous reports on environmental issues, often focusing on land-use matters, and was the author or coauthor of three books on forestry and conservation practices.

Shortly after the lawsuit, United States v. Reserve Mining Co., went to trial in 1973, Stoddard encountered the trial judge, Miles Lord, in a hall of the federal courthouse in Minneapolis.

"Do you know me, Judge Lord?" he asked. When Lord said he didn't, Stoddard explained: "I'm the guy who got you into this."

Stoddard is survived by his former wife, Patricia Coulter Stoddard of Duluth; a daughter, Abby Marrier of Milaca, Minn.; four sons: Charles Jr. and Paul, both of St. Paul, and Glenn and Jeffrey, who live in Wisconsin, and five grandchildren.

A private memorial service will be held at Wolf Springs Forest, the Stoddard family's nature preserve near Minong, Wis. The family suggests that memorials go to the Sigurd Olson Institute for Environmental Studies at Northland College in Ashland, Wis.