Last year Congress enacted the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, to finance pilot projects in the most modern police techniques. Today, I am signing into law a substantial—and well deserved—pay increase for District policemen.

Better police organization is part of the answer. Last year I appointed a District of Columbia Crime Commission and asked its members to recommend better ways of reducing crime in Washington. Many of the Commission's recommendations are designed to make the organization of the District Police Department a model for the Nation. Most are already being carried out. And the District of Columbia Commissioners have informed me that they have signed and are putting into effect the reorganization plan for the Police Department recommended by the District of Columbia Crime Commission.

The problem of crime outside of the District of Columbia must primarily be dealt with by local officials. I have promised them the complete cooperation of the Federal Government within its proper sphere. We have already begun that cooperation with the Law Enforcement Assistance Act. We are prepared to expand our cooperative efforts. I will act promptly on the recommendations of the National Crime Commission, which I appointed in July of 1965, when they are received.

We know that criminal behavior, and the conditions out of which it springs, will not yield easily to our efforts. But we have given the highest priority to an intelligent, relentless fight to make the streets of the District of Columbia safe for our citizens and for our visitors—and we shall make them so.

I renew my pledge to pursue every avenue, use every tool, support any law that holds promise of advancing us in our fight against crime. In doing so I will need the cooperation of every man and woman whose commitment—as is mine—is to a capital where civic order and safety are law, and justice prevails.

GEOTHERMAL STEAM ACT OF 1966

I am withholding my approval from the Geothermal Steam Act of 1966.

I am taking this action because many of the principles embodied in the bill violate the public interest.

Geothermal steam is produced by the internal heat of the earth. It is well known to every schoolchild in America under other names. Old Faithful at Yellowstone is one example of a geothermal spring.

We know very little about how extensive or valuable our geothermal resources are. They may be an inexhaustible supply of energy. Today, I am signing into law the geothermal spring at Old Faithful at Yellowstone. But the steam from a single geothermal spring is generating enough electricity to serve a community of 50,000 people. Geothermal springs may also hold untrapped mineral wealth—such as gold, lithium, and silver.

These circumstances dictate a policy of prudence and reason in the leasing of Federal lands to develop this resource. 8. 1674 does just the opposite.

It ignores the basic lessons we have learned much to our sorrow—that our natural resources are priceless treasures which must be developed with wisdom and foresight.

The bill is flawed by six major provisions which run counter to sound public policy:

First. It provides for unfair and unlimited "grandfather" rights. The holders of mineral or mining leases on Federal lands as of September 7, 1965, would be automatically entitled to convert them into geothermal leases. This amounts to a free gift of valuable public property rights to us. We should not deal with them on an undue advantage over other prospective developers.

Second. It provides for maximum leases of 5,200 acres—an area four times greater than is needed for economical development. This could result in a single developer monopolizing the geothermal resources of entire States.

Third. It provides that royalties are payable only if sold or utilized. This could encourage the wanton waste of a precious natural asset.

Fourth. It fails to provide specific and clear authority for the Government to readjust the conditions of leases at suitable intervals. The public deserves this protection because we still know so little about our geothermal resources.

Fifth. It provides for perpetual leases to the developer if steam is produced in commercial quantities. As a result, future generations of Americans will have lost their stake in the formulation of policies for the natural resources which may be inexhaustible, and whose potential we are only beginning to appreciate.

Sixth. It gives the developer 20 years in which to begin production. Our scientists and engineers say that this is too long a period and will encourage speculation.

In short, I have withheld my approval because this bill does not sufficiently protect the interests of the American people.

If these were only technical flaws in a measure providing for the necessary development of geothermal energy, I would gladly sign the bill. But I believe we must move vigorously to make use of this promising national asset.

But they are more than technical flaws. They represent a serious failure to protect the public interest.

When we consider landmark legislation of this sort, dealing with a vast and little-known natural resource, we must remember that we are acting—not just for the next few years from today—but for decades to come. Once we have given away the people's interest in the wealth of their land, we cannot easily retrieve what has been lost. We must understand that we are trustees for the people for today or 5 years from today—but for future generations of Americans will have lost their stake in the formulation of policies for the natural resources which may be inexhaustible, and whose potential we are only beginning to appreciate.

The courts are the traditional forum for determining legal questions relating to landownership and I see no reason for legislating special exceptions and interfering with the orderly judicial process. If the case is resolved in favor of the claimants, they will receive title to the land without the present bill. If the case is resolved against the claimants and the Congress believes that the equities were so compelling that relief should have been granted, the Congress can act after the factual issues have been fully litigated and a complete record has been assembled.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

October 22, 1966.