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PUBLIC UTILITIES

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The problems of our public utilities are extremely serious. More than anything, they are suffering from the effects of inflation -- in particular the explosion in oil prices but also from high interest rates. Their inability to raise all the capital they need is forcing them to reduce construction plans, which causes unemployment today and the real threat of brown-outs tomorrow.

The most fundamental part of the solution to these problems is for increases in the cost of electricty, reflecting high prices for fuel, to be paid by the consumers. This means higher rates, as painful as they are.

In the past, the utilities industry has developed rate structures that encourage excessive energy consumption. These promotional rates are often at lower levels than the cost of the energy provided, and thus give a perverse incentive at a time when conservation is our goal. Regulatory authorities should eliminate such rate schedules promptly.

While the Federal Government will not pre-empt the regulatory functions of the States, the States must meet their responsibilities fully.

In addition, the restructuring of the investment tax credit and its increase from 4 percent to 10 percent for the utilities (the same as for businesses generally) will assist these companies in overcoming their financial problems. The new proposal that dividends paid on qualified preferred stock also be allowed as a deduction to the paying corporation will also help the utilities improve their capital structure, and energy conservation measures, mandatory and voluntary, will hold down future financing requirements of utilities.

THRIFT INSTITUTIONS

THRIFT INSTITUTIONS

Our savings institutions are another victim of the twin scourges of high inflation and high interest rates. To correct this situation, we must bring inflation down. However, we must also provide the means for the thrift industry to restructure itself -- to give these institutions the ability to compete on an equal basis in the financial markets and to operate effectively under all interest-rate conditions. To this end, we urge prompt passage of the Financial Institutions Act of 1973.

The Act will reduce the structural differences between commercial banks and thrift institutions, primarily by permitting the thrift institutions to engage in additional deposit and credit activities. Passage of this Act would provide a broader range of financial services for consumers and a higher rate of return for savers. It would improve income and liquidity in the thrift institutions. The Act also contains provisions that will improve and support the mortgage market.

In addition, we support the proposals now under consideration in both the House and Senate to increase Federal insurance on private deposits. We recommend an increase from $20,000 to $50,000 Such an increase will reinforce public confidence in our financial system.

THE BUDGET

Control of the Federal Budget is a vital component of our anti-inflation efforts. Reducing the fiscal 1975 budget is the first step in reducing the powerful momentum of our rapidly climbing Federal budget and thereby gaining the spending control so necessary for 1976 and beyond. And this extended budget control will substantially reduce inflation over the longer term.

This should not suggest that budget control has no short-run benefits. Quite the contrary. A reduction in the deficit for fiscal 1975 would reduce pressures in the financial markets, lower interest rates and provide more credit for housing and other new capital investment. It would mean that monetary policy would not have to bear the full burden of economic policy restraint. And it would reduce inflationary expectations by demonstrating convincingly that the Federal government is putting its own financial house in order.

Our program for fiscal discipline has elements on both sides of the budget. On the revenue side we have proposed a tax surcharge on high-income taxpayers and corporations. The increased revenues from the surcharge will pay for the additional unemployment insurance, the Community Improvement Program, the increased and restructured investment tax credit and the revised tax status of preferred stock dividends.

On the expenditure side, the President has reaffirmed his intention to hold budget outlays for fiscal 1975 to below $300 billion. Cutbacks of over $5 billion will be needed to reach the goal. We are already in the fourth month of the fiscal year; thus reductions of the amount required will be difficult to obtain. There is need for rapid action, and the Congress and Executive together will need to work together quickly and effectively to put expenditures on a long-term track that is consistent with the productive capacity of the American economy and with what the American people are willing to pay for.

The President has asked the Congress to enact a bill setting a spending target for fiscal year 1975 of less than $300 billion. In establishing that target, the bill outlines a plan for developing a set of actions that would result in the necessary spending reductions of FY 1975. These actions would be transmitted to Congress for its consideration when it returns in November. The actions to hold down spending will concentrate on those programs that serve special interests, create inequities, or are less essential at this time when fiscal discipline is so important. Concurrence of the Congress in these proposals before the beginning of calendar year 1975 is essential if the $300 billion target is to be achieved.

The Administration together with the Congress have already begun to take action on this outlay control program in national defense activities. The Congress has passed, and the President has signed, a defense appropriation bill that will reduce defense outlays in FY 1975 by about $2 billion. This is the largest single cut we will be making and is a good start toward the $300 billion goal.

The remainder of the necessary outlay control plan will be carried out in the fullest spirit of cooperation with the Congress. pid consideration by the Congress of legislative proposals and dget rescissions and deferrals under the Congressional Budget and mpoundment Control Act of 1974 will be essential if we are to meet our goal. Only through the most careful consultation with the Congress can we succeed. We must achieve a mutual understanding of the best ways to hold down the budget.

We also have to improve the content of the budget. As now stated, the budget -- because it does not adequately show the impact of the Government's credit program -- does not present to the American people a complete picture of Federal activities and their effect on the economy. The Federally sponsored credit agencies and the many guarantee programs must be brought into the budget more directly.

The table below shows the estimated impact on budget expenditures and receipts of the proposals in this message.

BUDGET IMPACT

	FY 1975	FY 1976
	($ billions)	
New Proposals		
Additional Revenues:		
Tax surcharge:		
Corporations	+0.6	+1.5
High-income individuals	+1.0	+1.6
Revenue Losses:		
Employment assistance*	-0.1	-1.3
Housing program	-0.1	-0.1
Investment tax credit:		
Individuals	-0.1	-0.5
Corporations	-0.7	-2.0
Preferred stock dividends	---	-0.1
Net Impact	+0.6	-0.9
Pending Tax Reform Bill		
Pending tax reform:		
Increased oil taxes	+1.3	+2.2
Closing loopholes**	+0.1	+0.8
Simplification	---	-0.4
Other tax reform	-1.0	-0.2
Low-income relief	-0.9	-1.6
— recommended addition	---	-0.4
Net Impact	-0.5	+0.4
Budget Impact of New and Pending Proposals	+0.1	-0.5

Note: In addition to the above items, new expenditure deferrals and recissions will be proposed to hold fiscal 1975 expenditures below $300 billion.

* For fiscal 1975, this assumes that a 6 percent unemployment rate triggers the program into effect on Mar. 1, 1975. Note, however, that the total expenditures for this program in fiscal 1975 will be $0.9 billion; $0.8 billion is already included in earlier budget estimates. For fiscal 1976, this assumes that the unemployment rate falls below 6 percent and thus triggers an end to payments as of December 31, 1975.

**Minimum tax on income and limitation on accounting losses.

TAX POLICY

SURCHARGE

TAX PROPOSALS

Surcharge

1. Corporations

A 5 percent corporate tax surcharge will be imposed effective January 1, 1975, and continuing through December 1975. The surcharge will be computed by multiplying the corporate tax (before credits against tax, but including the additional tax for tax preferences) by 5 percent. For corporations with taxable years ending in 1975 or beginning in 1975 and ending after 1975, the surcharge will be computed on a pro rata basis according to the number of days of the taxable year in 1975.

2. Individuals

A 5 percent individual tax surcharge will also be imposed for 1975 on income tax liabilities attributable to income above an upper income threshold.

In general, the proposal is designed to exclude from surcharge families with adjusted gross incomes below $15,000 and single persons with adjusted gross incomes below $7,500. However, because income tax liabilities are based on "taxable income" rather than "adjusted gross income," it is necessary to translate, on some average basis, the $15,000 and $7,500 into comparable "taxable income" figures. That was done as follows:

	Families	Single persons
Adjusted gross income	$15,000	$7,500
Standard deduction	-2,000	-1,300
Exemptions (assuming 4 for families 1 for single person)	-3,000	- 750
	$10,000	$5,450

Thus, the surcharge will be expressed technically as a surcharge on tax liabilities attributable to that portion of the taxpayer's "taxable income" in excess of the $10,000 or $5,450, as the case may be. Not all taxpayers have the same deductions and exemptions as those assumed above. For

example, there will be married taxpayers with more exemptions and deductions than those assumed, who will pay no surcharge even though their adjusted gross incomes are somewhat greater than $15,000. Conversely, some with fewer exemptions may pay surtax even though their adjusted gross incomes are somewhat less than $15,000.

The computation is straightforward. The taxpayer (1) computes his regular tax, (2) subtracts from that the amount of tax applicable to either his $10,000 or his $5,450 exemption, and (3) then multiplies the balance by 5 percent. For example, a family of four filing a joint return and having $20,000 of taxable income would calculate a regular tax of $4,380 and subtract from that $1,820 (the tax on the first $10,000) to arrive at $2,560 which is subject to the 5 percent surcharge of $128. A single person with $10,000 of taxable income would calculate a regular tax of $2,090 and subtract from that $994.50 (the tax on the first $5,450) to arrive at $1,095.50, which is subject to the 5 percent surcharge of $54.78.

INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT

Investment Tax Credit

The proposal to change the investment tax credit has three principal parts: (1) the elimination of existing limitations and restrictions on the credit which tend to discriminate unfairly between the types of taxpayers and investments which qualify for the credit, (2) an increase in the rate of the present credit from 7 percent to 10 percent, and (3) making the credit a reduction in basis for depreciation purposes.

1. Present law

An amount equal to 7 percent of the cost of qualifying property (generally, tangible personal property used in a trade or business) may be offset directly against income tax liability, with the following limitations based on the expected useful life of the property:

Useful Life	Percent of cost of property qualifying for credit
0-3 years	0
3-5 years	33-1/3
5-7 years	66-2/3
7 years and over	100

Public utility property qualifies for only a 4 percent credit (The Ways and Means Committee has tentatively decided to remove this limitation).

The maximum credit which may be claimed in a taxable year is limited to $25,000 plus one-half of the excess of tax liability over $25,000.

Excess credits (limited by the above provision) may generally be carried back three taxable years and forward seven taxable years, after which they expire if still unused.

2. Proposed changes

Increase the rate from 7 percent to 10 percent. This will increase cash flow for all companies in the immediate future. It will be offset in future years by lesser depreciation deductions.

Eliminate the limitations based on useful life so that all property with a life in excess of three years will qualify for the full credit.

Replace the present limit on the maximum credit which may be claimed with eventual full refundability for the excess of credits over tax liability. Credits in excess of the present limitations may be carried back three years and then to the succeeding three years to offset tax liability, after which time any remaining excess credits will be refunded directly to the taxpayers. This will

-- Help growing companies which have present investments which are large in comparison with their current incomes.

-- Help companies in financial difficulties, which get no benefit from credit because they have little or no income tax liability against which to apply it.

-- Help small businesses, which under present law are more severely affected by the restrictions and limitations.

The three-year rule postpones adverse budget impact until revenues from basis adjustment are sufficient to offset revenue loss from this refundable feature.

Require the taxpayer to reduce the cost of qualifying property for depreciation purposes by the amount of the investment tax credit. This makes the credit neutral with respect to long-lived and short-lived assets and removes the present discrimination against long-lived assets.

Retain the present $50,000 per year limitation on qualifying used property.

DEDUCTIONS FOR DIVIDENDS PAID - PREFERRED STOCKS

Deduction for Dividends Paid on Certain Preferred Stock

To encourage expansion of corporate equity capital and increase the effectiveness of capital markets, it is proposed that dividends paid on qualified preferred stock be allowed as a deduction to the payor corporation. The provisions of the Internal Revenue Code providing for exclusions for dividends received by corporations would not be applicable to these dividends.

The deduction would only be available for cash dividends paid on preferred stock issued after December 31, 1974, for cash or pre-existing bona fide debt of the issuing corporation. For these purposes, preferred stock would be required to be non-voting, limited and preferred as to dividends and entitled to a liquidating preference. The intention to qualify preferred stock under this new provision of the Internal Revenue Code would be required to be clearly indicated at the time the stock was issued.

TAX REFORM BILL

The Tax Reform Bill

Low-income taxpayer relief

We support the Tax Reform bill now pending in the Ways and Means Committee. It provides about $1.4 billion of tax relief for individuals with incomes of less than $15,000. In addition, the Tax Reform bill would produce a long-term revenue gain of about $500 to $600 million per year beginning in FY 1976 and we support using those revenues when received also to provide further income tax reductions for lower income families.

The principal individual tax reductions provided in the bill are increases in the minimum standard deduction, the standard deduction and the retirement income credit and a new simplification deduction which for most taxpayers will be larger than the miscellaneous, hard-to-compute deductions which it would replace.

The tax reductions in the bill are made possible primarily by revenues gained from tax reform measures and by increased taxes on oil producers. The tax reform proposals are based on Treasury proposals advanced a year and a half ago. The two main features are: (1) a minimum tax, designed to ensure that all taxpayers pay some reasonable amount of tax on their economic income, and (2) a provision (known as "LAL, i.e., limitation on artificial accounting losses) designed to eliminate tax shelter devices under which tax is avoided through the deduction of artificial losses which are not real losses.

In December 1973, the Treasury proposed a windfall profits tax on oil, which is now incorporated in the Tax Reform bill in modified form. The Committee has also provided for the phase-out over three years of percentage depletion on oil and gas.

The Committee bill raises less revenue from tax reform and oil taxes for calendar years 1974 and 1975 than the Treasury proposed. The Treasury hopes that Congress will restore some of the reform which the Treasury proposed. However, it is most important that tax reform and tax reduction legislation be enacted as promptly as possible and the Administration will support the bill in its present form.

2. Savings and investment proposals

Greater productivity in the next several years will be critical in winding down the wage-price spiral. That will require major new investments.

The Tax Reform bill now pending makes an important contribution by (i) bringing the investment credit for utilities up to the credit generally applicable for other industries, (ii) liberalizing the treatment of capital gains and losses, and (iii) eliminating U.S. withholding tax on foreign portfolio investments, thus encouraging investment by foreigners in the United States.

Tax Exemption for Interest on Savings Accounts

Tax Exemption for Interest on Savings Accounts

Various proposals have been made to exempt interest on savings accounts. We do not support any such proposal for reasons which include the following:

(1) It would initially decrease the aggregate amount of saving. A $750 exemption for interest on time and savings deposits would cost about $2 billion, which the government would have to borrow in the private market to make up. That borrowing reduces the amount of savings available for private investment.

(2) It would not be effective. It would not substantially increase savings deposits because the tax exemption would not be a major benefit to most taxpayers. For a taxpayer in the 25 percent bracket, exemption would make a 5.25 percent account equivalent to a 7 percent taxable account, which is still considerably below the rates available elsewhere. Only high-bracket taxpayers would get major benefits.

(3) Passbook savings may increase some, but total savings will not increase. The principal effect would be some switching. It doesn't operate as an incentive for new savings because it doesn't reward the increase in savings.

(4) It would create new distortions in the credit and investment markets.

VOLUNTARY
PROGRAMS

CITIZENS' ACTION COMMITTEE TO FIGHT INFLATION

The following Citizens have already agreed to help organize and support a voluntary private sector effort to mobilize all Americans in the fight against inflation:

MAYOR JOSEPH ALIOTO of San Francisco	Chairman, U. S. Conference of Mayors
ARCH BOOTH	President, Chamber of Commerce of the United States
RUSSELL W. FREEBURG	White House Coordinator
DAVID L. HALE	President, United States Jaycees
MRS. LILLIE HERNDON	President, National Congress of Parents and Teachers
ROBERT P. KEIM	President, The Advertising Council
MRS. CARROLL E. MILLER	President, General Federation of Women's Clubs
WILLIAM J. MEYER	President, Central Sprinkler Co. Landsdale, Pennsylvania
GEORGE MYERS	President, Consumer Federation of America
RALPH NADER	Private Citizen
LEO PERLIS	Director of Community Service, AFL-CIO
SYLVIA PORTER	National Syndicated Columnist
GOVERNOR CALVIN RAMPTON of Utah	Chairman, National Governors Conference
STANFORD SMITH	President, American Newspaper Publishers Association
FRANK STANTON	Chairman, American National Red Cross
ROGER FELLOWS	4-H, University of Minnesota

VINCENT T. WASILEWSKI	President, National Association of Broadcasters
ROY WILKINS	Executive Director, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
DOUGLAS WOODRUFF	Executive Director, American Association of Retired Persons