

which development needs and environmental constraints are dealt with separately. Each area requires individual zoning ordinances approved by the city council. While the council is making these land use decisions, the entire city has been under a zoning and development moratorium. Any land developers seeking a building permit during the six-month moratorium has had his request handled under special variance procedures.

In order to handle its planned population growth, Boca Raton has also developed a comprehensive plan and a 20-year capital improvement program. It is expected that the city will reach its 100,000 population ceiling in about 20 years.



Back from the dead

At least one "dead" lake — New York's Onondaga — has been brought back to life by the state's ban on phosphate detergents. Since the institution of the ban in 1971, the lake's phosphate content has decreased some 57 percent. Concurrent with the decline in phosphate is the replacement of scum-forming blue green algae with beneficial green algae.

According to O'Brien & Gere Engineering, a Syracuse consulting firm which has studied the lake for five years, the recovery of Lake Onondaga offers the first instance of living proof that restriction of phosphates can improve the biological health of a body of water. The presence of phosphate in water acts as a fertilizer, stimulating excess growth of aquatic plants. When these plants die, they consume oxygen in the water as they decay. This process, called eutrophication, robs fish of the oxygen which they need to survive.

One of the scientists involved in the Onondaga study believes that bans on phosphates in detergents can partially substitute for tertiary treatment of sewage in some areas. Because federal funds are not readily available for tertiary sewage treatment plant construction, a ban on phosphates in detergents, which contribute about 70 percent of the phosphates found in U.S. waterways, can significantly cut back the potential for water pollution in some communities.

Pipeline bill signed

In 1968, a major deposit of crude oil was discovered in the vicinity of Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's northern coast. In a controversy which began with the announcement of that discovery, environmentalists have strenuously opposed the construction of a trans-Alaska pipeline designed to transport the oil to the warm-water port of Valdez in southern Alaska. Five years, several lawsuits and untold hours of public debate later, Congress voted final approval for the project on November 12 and 13. Although the vote represented a clear defeat for environmentalists, something new has been added in the form of several amendments which do not relate directly to the pipeline itself — amendments which have soured the victory for the oil companies, the President and a good many federal agencies.

The trans-Alaska pipeline received official sanction on November 16 as the President signed the bill into law. Although there had been some speculation that what the White House termed "extraneous matters" included in the bill might lead to a Presidential veto, the combination of overwhelming Congressional approval and nationwide fuel shortages proved to be insurmountable. A group of two dozen key legislators and Administration representatives gathered for the signing ceremony; those present included staunch pipeline advocates like Senators Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) and Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Representatives Don Young (R-Alaska), Harold Johnson (R-Calif.) and James Haley (D-Fla.). Also present were Presidential energy advisor John Love, and, representing the Department of the Interior, the widow of late Interior Undersecretary William Pecora, an ardent trans-Alaska pipeline supporter.

The "extraneous matters" which so concerned the President have implications which reach far beyond the construction of the 789-mile-long pipeline and do much to remove some of the bitter taste from environmentalists' mouths. Firstly, a strict damage liability has been placed on the owners and operators of the pipeline (a provision which understandably alarms the oil industry). The bill also requires Senate confirmation of the heads of the Energy Policy Office and the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration, and provides authorization for the Federal Trade Commission to seek preliminary injunctions to stop deceptive or unfair business practices and to represent itself in court if the Justice Department fails to take action on an FTC request within 10 days. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the bill authorizes regulatory agencies to require profit data from businesses without prior approval from the Office of Management and Budget.

The bill would also bar the exportation of all domestically produced crude oil unless the President determines that such exports would not detract from oil supplies available in the United States, a curious exercise in logic apparently designed to allow exportation to allies confronted with crippling shortages.

On November 12, before the House of Representatives voted favorably on the bill 361-14, Rep. Sam Steiger (R-Ariz.) offered a motion to send the bill back to the conference committee with instructions to delete the non-pipeline provisions. That motion was defeated 213-162. The Senate acted favorably on the bill by a vote of 80-5 on the following day.

It is expected that the controversial Alaskan oil will begin flowing into California refineries by the end of 1977, barring any major construction problems or pipeline leaks, a possibility which alarms environmentalists. Other objections concern projected damage to fragile arctic ecosystems which may result from the disruption of wildlife habitats and the melting of arctic permafrost.

The bill also contains energy-related provisions not directly relevant to the pipeline itself. Small "stripper wells," those producing 10 or fewer barrels of oil per day would be exempted from price controls which have rendered their operation profitable.

Given the urgency of Congressional efforts to conserve present energy supplies, reporters were unable to resist the temptation to note that thermometers in the Senate read 78 degrees on the day of the vote, 10 degrees above the level of 68 degrees recommended by the President in his televised energy message.