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Responsibility for the administration of the Federal Water Pollution Control program was transferred today to the Department of the Interior from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall began immediately to exercise his new authority by issuing guidelines to the States for the setting of water quality standards on the Nation's interstate waters.

Under the Federal Water Quality Act of 1965 Congress required the States to set quality standards on interstate waters by June 30, 1967. If a State fails to set adequate standards, they will be set by the Secretary of the Interior. To date 27 States have indicated their intention to meet the '67 deadline.

In a letter addressed to the 50 Governors, Secretary Udall urged a Federal-State partnership approach aimed at assuring the Nation the supply of clean water necessary for its continuous growth. Secretary Udall enclosed copies of the guidelines developed by the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration. The guidelines require that economic, health, conservation, and aesthetic values be considered in determining the most appropriate use of a stream. They also require that the States hold public hearings before setting quality standards.

In issuing the guidelines, Secretary Udall said, "President Johnson has made it clear that 'no one has the right to use America's rivers and America's waterways that belong to all the people as a sewer."

"The standard of purity we are asking the States to provide for our rivers constitutes one of our best tools for upgrading our waters, and for drawing the line against any further abuse of our water resources," Udall said.