

s t a t e m e n t

of the TAB vice chairman—Edward M. Kennedy

EDWARD M. KENNEDY
MASSACHUSETTS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

October 13, 1995

The Honorable Amo Houghton
Chair, Technology Assessment Board
Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Amo and Friends of OTA:

I wish I could be with all of you today for the final meeting of the Technology Assessment Board.

As one of the sponsors of the bipartisan legislation that created OTA 23 years ago, I watched with pride as this unique agency became a world-renowned source of information and analysis on technology issues. Standing at the intersection of science and government, OTA played an extremely valuable role in helping Congress to understand the significance of scientific and technological advances and harness them for the benefit of the American people. OTA helped us evaluate and respond effectively to challenges in fields ranging from agriculture to law enforcement, from adolescent health to nuclear disarmament.

In my view, Congress made a serious mistake in choosing to terminate OTA. It is ironic that OTA is being eliminated to save money. The fact is, OTA has saved money for the federal government many times over, by guiding us away from unwise expenditures and toward cost-effective ones.

OTA was a bargain for the America people. Its large impact on the legislative process was far out of proportion to the relatively small sums allotted to the agency each year.

You recognized these facts, Amo, and fought hard to save OTA in the last few months. Fritz, Ted, Orrin, Chuck, Claiborne and I did our best in the

Senate to match your efforts in the House. We came up a few votes short, but it wasn't for lack of trying. We won hands down on the merits, but we lost narrowly on the politics, and I regret that very much.

Roger Herdman has been an outstanding captain of this ship. He has been a gifted administrator and a good friend to all of us. That we came so close to saving OTA was a measure of how far Roger and OTA's superb staff brought us.

In his Inaugural Address, President Kennedy challenged the American people to "invoke the wonders of science, instead of its terrors...Together," he said, "let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, and tap the ocean depths."

OTA has helped us meet those challenges, and more. I'm proud to have worked with all of you, and prouder than ever of OTA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. M. Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "K" and "E".

Edward M. Kennedy