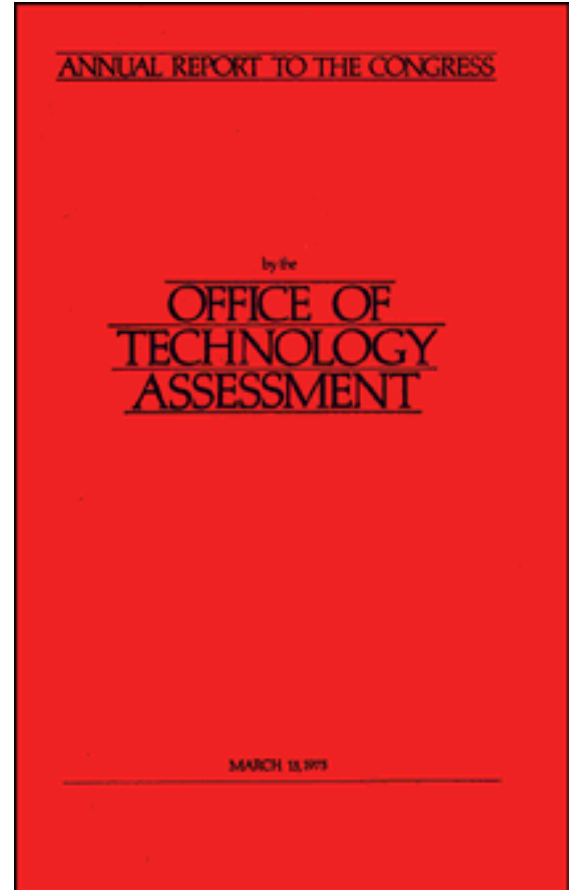


*Annual Report to the Congress by the Office
of Technology Assessment: March 15, 1975*

March 1975



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Technology Assessment Board
Washington, D. C., March 15, 1975

To the Congress of the United States:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT AND MR. SPEAKER: We are pleased to submit, pursuant to section 11 of the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-484), the annual report of the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). This report is intended to provide the Congress with information about the activities of the Office during the year ended March 15, 1975. Although the legislation establishing OTA was approved October 13, 1972, funds for the Office ~~were~~ not made available until November 1, 1973. Accordingly, this is the first annual report to cover a full year of OTA operations. During the greater part of this year, the positions of chairman and vice chairman were held by Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Congressman Charles A. Mosher.

As stated in the Technology Assessment Act, the purpose of OTA is to equip the Congress with "new and effective means for securing competent, unbiased information concerning the physical, biological, economic, social, and political effects" of technological applications; and to serve as an aid "in the legislative assessment of matters pending before the Congress, particularly in those instances where the Federal Government may be called upon to consider support for, or management or regulation of, technological applications."

In virtually every public policy issue confronted by the Congress today, the expanding and pervasive potential of technology presents both opportunities and complications. History has shown that even slightly differing technological approaches can result in dramatically different economic, social and environmental consequences—not all of them expected or desired. OTA was established in response to the long-felt Congressional need for its own source of expert advice, independent of the executive branch, to help define the options and the probable consequences—both direct and indirect—inherent in proposed technological solutions to policy problems.

As an agency of, by, and for the legislative branch, the primary criterion of success for OTA is its ability to be of timely and useful service to the standing committees of the Congress. The Technology Assessment Board has been encouraged by the Office's accomplishments during its first full year of operations. OTA brought together scientific and social leaders for the planning and performance of multidisciplinary assessments in the pri-

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ority fields of energy, food, materials, the oceans, health, and transportation. Although major assessments can require up to a year or more to complete, interim information from such studies has been made available in several instances to meet more immediate Congressional needs.

During the year under report, studies dealing with the generic drug issue, data collection for automobile safety standards, Interior Department plans to accelerate offshore oil and gas development, methods for analyzing strategic defense doctrine, and a full-scale review of the budget and plans of the new Energy Research and Development Administration were completed by OTA within deadlines dictated by the hearing schedules of requesting Congressional committees.

OLIN E. TEAGUE,
Chairman of the Board,
Office of Technology Assessment

CLIFFORD P. CASE,
Vice Chairman of the Board,
Office of Technology Assessment