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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE HEARINGS ON FY1975 PUBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATIONS SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS APRIL 29, 1974

Mr. Chairman, these hearings come at an appropriate time for those of us from Kansas who are concerned with water resource development in our State.

During the spring of 1973, record rainfall covered our State and many other portions of the Midwest. As we all recall, many areas--particularly those in the lower Mississippi River Basin--suffered some of the worst devastation in history. However, in Kansas our flood damage was extremely light in comparison with 1951, the last year of comparable rainfall. Inundated land was measured in the low thousands, rather than millions of acres. Property damage was totaled up in tens and hundreds of thousands, rather than billions of dollars. Human suffering and misery were replaced by worry and anxiety in the great number of cases. Of course, certain areas were hit with severity, and some 60 Kansas counties were declared eligible for Federal disaster assistance. But by broad measurements, the spring of 1973 hardly bears mention alongside 1951 and even other years such as 1957 and '58 when less rainfall and runoff occurred.

Again last fall torrential rains hit the entire state. Significant damage was inflicted by local flooding and several tornadoes, but the widespread devastation which might have been expected under similar circumstances in earlier years did not occur. In fact, data compiled by the Corps of Engineers indicates that in September 1973, alone, three reservoirs in the Kansas River Basin--Tuttle Creek, Milford and Perry--prevented a total of \$247.7 million in damages. In view of the fact that their total project costs were \$179 million, I would say that is a return on investment in which any investor can take pride. And I believe the many public spirited citizens who have worked so many years for water resource development in Kansas deserve a special measure of credit and recognition.

MANAGING WATER RESOURCES

Kansas has wisely used the more than two decades since those 1951 floods to develop and execute a plan for managing its water resources. Numerous dams, waterways, levees, and municipal flood control projects have been put in place across the State. The Federal Government--notably the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation--with the continuing support of the Kansas Congressional delegation--has worked in close partnership with local citizens, business and industry groups and the state and local governments at each step in this process--just as shown by the delegation which is present today.

I suppose a statistical price tag can be placed on the damage which was not inflicted, the lives which were not lost and the misery which was averted. But in my view these benefits are not really capable of being calculated. Of course, the reports on the three lakes mentioned earlier stand as powerful and convincing evidence of their value. And if they served no other purpose--provided no recreation, meant no additional water supply, promoted no economic development--they would be worth every dollar invested in them.

FUNDING DECISIONS

So as this year's consideration of appropriations for water resource development is undertaken, I would urge that the decisions in this area be viewed in the light of the proven benefits of water resource development in Kansas and the potential for continued contributions to the wellbeing of our citizens.

I do not wish to touch the specifics of the entire Kansas program for Fiscal Year 1975. We have many ongoing projects at various stages of development. By and large these projects are receiving support at levels which represent a

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reasonable balance between the desires of our citizens to have them completed and the necessity of controlling Federal expenditures in the fight against inflation. I would hope that the requested budget amounts will continue to maintain this balance, both in the interests of our Kansas projects and the national interest of maintaining a stable, growing economy.

I do, however, wish to give particular emphasis to several projects which the Committee may wish to accord special consideration.

GROVE LAKE

Grove Lake, located just outside the City of Topeka on Soldier Creek is in the final stages of advanced engineering and design work, and construction funds are needed to enable progress to be maintained at a steady pace. The project has received exceptionally strong support from local citizens and governments, and I feel FY 75 funding for its construction in the amount of \$1 million would be most appropriate.

FORT SCOTT LAKE

The Fort Scott Lake on the Marmaton River near Fort Scott has had its pre-construction planning completed for a number of years, and a go-ahead for land acquisition and construction is long overdue. I believe it is important that this decision be made reached, for a number of reasons which deal both with the project's value and a sense of fairness to those who will be affected by it. The project is important and will provide significant benefits to its entire area--particularly in terms of the City of Fort Scott's water supply, and these considerations merit the start of construction. But there are also the effects of continued delay on the landowners in the project area to be considered. Farmers and homeowners are in a state of uncertainty which makes it impossible for them to plan ahead, secure loans or conduct their affairs on much more than a year-to-year basis. This is extremely unfair, and I believe the Government has an obligation to these people.

I have been active in attempting to resolve this situation. I have met with those interested in development, with landowners and with Washington officials. Frankly, the project's cost-benefit ratio gives it a low priority insofar as the chances for starting construction are concerned, so I believe we must be realistic in our assessments. Perhaps a restudy or other review of the project would be the most appropriate means of resolving these questions.

TOMAHAWK & INDIAN CREEK LAKES

I would also mention in passing that many of these same considerations of fairness to landowners also apply to the Tomahawk Lake and Indian Creek Lake projects in Johnson County. Restudy of both of these projects has resolved serious questions which arose in relation to their feasibility, and now that substantial cost-benefit ratios have been demonstrated, I feel they should be dealt with at an expedited pace, since they both lie in the path of heavy anticipated development. Substantial land acquisition funds are needed.

ARKANSAS RIVER & STATE WATER PLAN STUDIES

A vital feature for wise and effective water resource development is the planning process. Without a comprehensive and thorough approach to assessing the needs and alternatives for constructing, locating and designing these projects, we cannot make the most effective use of appropriated funding.

Therefore, I wish to urge that funding--in the amount of \$36,000--be provided for completion of the Arkansas River study between Great Bend, Kansas, and John Martin Dam, Colorado. This represents an increase over the budget request to continue work on this study, but I believe it would be more economical and effective to complete this study and provide all concerned parties with the fullest possible information on the possibilities for this development.

Also, I wish to reaffirm my support for the Kansas State Water Plan. As I have previously indicated by letter to the subcommittee, this is a major study of the long range water development potential for the entire State, and it has been an outstanding joint effort by the State Water Resources Board and the Bureau of Reclamation. Funding was not provided in FY74 nor is it budgeted for FY75, but considering the project's importance to the agricultural and general economic future of Kansas, the fact that more than \$500,000 has already been invested in it and the Board's estimate that it can be completed in only three more years, I believe it should receive full support. Therefore, I urge FY75 funding of \$100,000.

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LOCAL PROTECTION PROJECTS

I would like to add a special word of support for the local flood protection projects of the Corps of Engineers. While not so costly or widely known as the large multipurpose lakes, these projects provide a great deal of security, peace of mind and economic stability in the communities they serve. Dodge City, El Dorado, Great Bend, Kansas City, Marion and Windfield all have these projects under way at different stages of planning and construction. And other smaller projects are also being undertaken throughout the State. Local citizens, and their city governments have given these projects enthusiastic support, and I urge that these projects be funded to the maximum possible extent. Because of their direct impact in the communities they protect, these appropriations for local protection projects are perhaps the best and most appreciated expenditures made in the Nation's water resources program.

MUD CREEK PROJECT - LAWRENCE

Mr. Chairman, I also wish to lend my support to the request of the City of Lawrence for extraordinary assistance in dealing with circumstances beyond their control. I refer to the Mud Creek flood protection project which has been a source of great frustration, uncertainty and continuing hazard to North Lawrence residents and property owners.

I do not wish to delve deeply into the details of this project, for others who are testifying today have a lengthy and full explanation of the project's history. But in summary, I feel it is fair to say that local authorities--the City of Lawrence and the Douglas County Kaw Drainage District--have expended more than \$1,500,000 for their share of the project. These expenditures were made in utmost good faith and with the firm expectation that they constituted performance of the obligations established by a firm plan formulated by the Corps of Engineers. So it was with a great deal of disappointment that local officials learned that the Corps of Engineers felt compelled to redesign the project to specifications which would provide less protection at prohibitively increased costs to the City and Drainage District.

The history of the problem is quite complex, but I feel that the Congress has an obligation to recognize the good faith efforts and expenditures of the local interests; therefore, the Congress should provide the necessary authority for the Corps of Engineers to construct the Mud Creek project according to the original plan.

It is not fair--for whatever the reasons--to change signals on the local authorities after they are so deeply committed to the original design. They and the taxpayers in the areas have a right to expect fairness from the federal government, so the Congress should act in this case to provide the necessary element of fairness which cannot be supplied by Administrative action.

Therefore, I urge the Committee to grant this relief as requested by the local officials who are presenting their very complete and compelling explanation of the Mud Creek situation today.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, this completes my testimony. I am pleased to appear before you again, today, and to have the honor of presenting this outstanding delegation of Kansans who have devoted so much of their time and effort to the support of our State's water resource development.