

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

EL DORADO LAKE DEDICATION CEREMONY

THANK YOU. IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE TODAY TO JOIN IN THE DEDICATION OF THIS TREMENDOUS ADDITION TO SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS. THOSE WHO MADE THIS DAY POSSIBLE ARE OWED A DEBT OF GRATITUDE. THEY ARE PEOPLE OF VISION, WHO RECOGNIZED A PROBLEM AND WORKED TO FIND A SOLUTION.

IT IS THAT KIND OF COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION WHICH WILL BE NEEDED TO SOLVE A MAJOR PROBLEM FACING ALL OF US RIGHT NOW. IN FACT IT HAS BEEN CALLED A CRISIS. I'M TALKING ABOUT WATER. THE FACT THAT WATER IS OUR MOST ESSENTIAL NATURAL RESOURCE MIGHT SEEM TO BE AN OBVIOUS STATEMENT EXCEPT THAT WE SELDOM TREAT IT AS SCARCE OR VALUABLE. IN MY VIEW, THE TRAUMA OF THE OIL CRISIS OF THE 1970'S WOULD PALE BY COMPARISON TO A NATIONAL WATER CRISIS.

MANY EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT OUR NEXT MAJOR CRISIS WILL BE WATER. SOME SAY THE CRISIS IS ALREADY HERE -- A CRISIS OF AWARENESS, OF A WILLINGNESS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE PROBLEMS OF TOMORROW NEED ATTENTION TODAY. WHETHER THE WATER PROBLEM IS TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE, OR TOO CONTAMINATED, THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO PLAN FOR FAIR AND EFFECTIVE USE OF OUR RESOURCES ARE SUBSTANTIAL. OBVIOUSLY, THIS COMMUNITY RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR ACTION AND YOU ARE TO BE COMMENDED.

I HAVE ATTENDED SEVERAL DEDICATIONS OF NEW KANSAS WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS OVER THE YEARS BUT I WONDER WHETHER WE HAVE WITNESSED THE END OF THE ERA WHICH WILL BE SORELY REGRETTED IN THE FUTURE.

THE PROJECT WE DEDICATE IS MORE THAN JUST A PLACE TO GO FISHING OR BOATING. IT WILL BE A LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO FLOODING AND A GUARANTEE FOR A STEADY SUPPLY OF WATER FOR THIS AREA. AS ALREADY INDICATED, THIS VALUABLE WATER PROJECT WAS STARTED MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO BY CONCERNED COMMUNITY LEADERS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SIGNS THAT CONGRESS MAY NOT BE SHARING THOSE CONCERNS ANYMORE. IT HAS BEEN FOURTEEN YEARS SINCE CONGRESS PASSED A MAJOR WATER RESOURCE AUTHORIZATION BILL. EIGHT YEARS SINCE WE AUTHORIZED ANY NEW PROJECTS. THAT MAY NOT MEAN MUCH NOW, BUT IN TEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS THERE WON'T BE MANY LAKE DEDICATIONS.

WATER POLICY HAS SUFFERED FROM TWO PROBLEMS: "EXECUTIVE POLITICS AND PROVINCIALISM." WE HAVE ENDURED A POLICY PARALYSIS DURING THE CARTER "HIT LIST" YEARS, AND THE REAGAN "COST SHARING" YEARS. AND, WHILE SOME MAY NOT CARE MUCH ABOUT THE WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS OF THE URBAN NORTHEAST, OTHERS CARE VERY LITTLE ABOUT DEPLETION OF THE OGALLALA AQUIFER, DROUGHTS, OR GREAT PLAINS FLOODING. THEY SHOULD, BECAUSE THE NATION AND THE WORLD DEPEND ON OUR BREAD BASKET.

SOME OF US IN CONGRESS BELIEVE WE SHOULD PUT POLITICS ASIDE AND ADDRESS WATER ISSUES. SO EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO I JOINED WITH A BI-PARTISAN GROUP OF SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES TO FORM THE NON-PROFIT NATIONAL WATER ALLIANCE. IT IS AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF WATER RESOURCE PROBLEMS AND TO FINDING CREATIVE NEW SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS BY BRINGING TOGETHER LEADERS FROM SCIENCE, INDUSTRY, ACADEMIA AND GOVERNMENT IN A NON-PARTISAN ENVIRONMENT.

MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS HAS BEEN RAISED FOR THE ALLIANCE FROM CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES AND INSTITUTIONS. IT'S AN ENCOURAGING BEGINNING. OUR WATER ALLIANCE HAS ALREADY CONDUCTED SYMPOSIUMS ON VARIOUS WATER ISSUES IN PHILADELPHIA, SAN DIEGO AND ST. PAUL. AND, WE WILL HOLD A CONFERENCE ON RURAL WATER PROBLEMS IN KANSAS CITY DURING THE FALL OF 1985.

WE OUGHT TO BE ACTING NOW TO ANSWER THE PROBLEMS OF WATER SUPPLY AND WATER QUALITY. HOW MANY BUSHELS OF WHEAT AND CORN WILL WE PRODUCE IF THE GREAT UNDERGROUND AQUIFERS OF KANSAS ARE ALLOWED TO RUN DRY? WE CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

HALF THE PROBLEM IS RECOGNIZING THERE IS A PROBLEM. IF WE DO, I HAVE TO BELIEVE THE INGENUITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL FIND AN ANSWER. A SOLUTION WAS FOUND TO THE CHALLENGING WATER PROBLEMS OF THIS AREA: AT TIMES THERE WAS TOO MUCH WATER -- UNWANTED FLOODWATER IN YOUR STREETS. AND AT OTHER TIMES, THERE WERE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS THAT YOUR TAPS MIGHT BE DRY. THOSE OF US WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT OVER THE YEARS WILL RECALL THAT THE OFFICIALS AT THE OLD SKELLY REFINERY WERE LEADING ADVOCATES OF THIS PROJECT FOR ITS ASSURED WATER SUPPLY. IN FACT I'M TOLD THAT IF YOU WANTED A QUICK UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE PROJECT, YOU CALLED THE REFINERY. WITHOUT THIS PROJECT, THE REFINERY MIGHT HAVE BEEN LOST YEARS AGO.

THE SKELLY REFINERY BECAME THE GETTY REFINERY. AND EARLIER THIS YEAR MANY FEARED IT WOULD BECOME THE "CLOSED REFINERY". BUT AGAIN, THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF MANY, REASON PREVAILED AT THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION AND THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF THIS COMMUNITY WAS ENSURED. NOW THAT WE FINALLY HAVE THE LAKE, I'M GLAD THERE WILL ALSO BE A REFINERY TO USE IT. I SEE A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR EL DORADO NOW THAT TEXACO IS IN TOWN. I'M PLEASED TO WELCOME THE MEN WHO WEAR THE BIG BRIGHT TEXACO STAR TO THIS COMMUNITY.