

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY ASSOCIATION

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
FEBRUARY 1, 1970

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE TODAY TO SHARE SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICA'S GREAT WATER RESOURCES. RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT HAS LONG BEEN A CONCERN OF YOUR ORGANIZATION. SINCE 1919, YOU HAVE CONTINUOUSLY FOUGHT FOR A COORDINATION OF OUR TOTAL WATER USES WITH SOIL IMPROVEMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEEDS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. BECAUSE OF YOUR ESTABLISHED INTEREST AND EXPERTISE, THE NATION MUST LOOK TO YOU FOR GUIDANCE AS IT AWAKENS TO WHAT PRESIDENT NIXON DESCRIBED AS THE "MAJOR CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN THE DECADE OF THE SEVENTIES."

WATER PROJECTS, THEIR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION AS WELL AS THE PROCEDURES BY WHICH THEY ARE APPROVED ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS CONCERN. OVER THE YEARS AN ELABORATE PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF THESE PROJECTS, WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE ITS OWN MOMENTUM, HAS EVOLVED. BECAUSE OF THESE PROCEDURES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY THE WEAK AND UNNECESSARY ELEMENTS. IT IS SAFE TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT CONGRESS SHARES A GREAT DEAL OF THE BLAME FOR MOST OF THE ARCHAIC AUTHORITIES UNDER WHICH THE CIVIL WORKS PROGRAMS OF THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS PRESENTLY OPERATES. AUTHORITIES ENACTED IN THE LATE 1800'S AND EARLY 1900'S MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR THE 1970'S.

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NOT ONLY THE AUTHORITY, BUT THE ENORMOUS BODY OF RULES, REGULATIONS, GUIDELINES, AND OTHER MATERIALS HAVE BECOME EXTREMELY COMPLEX AND AT THE VERY MINIMUM EXTREMELY CONFUSING TO THE PUBLIC. THIS WORK PLACES A BURDEN ON THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AS IT CARRIES OUT ITS ROLE IN THE BIENNIAL APPROVAL OF THE OMNIBUS RIVERS AND HARBORS ACT. SEVERAL OF MY COLLEAGUES AND I ON THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ARE CONSIDERING THE BEST MEANS BY WHICH THE COMMITTEE CAN EXERCISE ITS OTHER CONSTITUTIONALLY CHARGED FUNCTION TO CONDUCT OVERSIGHT HEARINGS ON THE GENERAL PROGRAM OF THE CORPS. IT IS HOPED THAT WE MAY BEGIN THIS REVIEW DURING THIS SESSION

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OF CONGRESS AND THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION WILL PLAY A MEANINGFUL
ROLE IN IDENTIFYING INEFFICIENCIES AND RECOMMENDING ALTERNATIVES
TO THE EXISTING PROGRAM. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS INVOLVE SUCH THINGS
AS THE BENEFIT/COST RATIO, RELOCATION OF INDIVIDUALS OR COMMUNI-
TIES AND, OF COURSE, THE CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME BETWEEN THE
AUTHORIZATION OF A PROJECT AND ITS CONSTRUCTION. THIS LAST FACTOR
OFTEN ADDS TO THE COMPLEXITY AND DIFFICULTY OF THE PREVIOUS TWO.
AS YOU ARE WELL AWARE, IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR A PROJECT ONCE
AUTHORIZED TO NOT BE INITIATED--MUCH LESS COMPLETED--FOR SEVERAL
YEARS FOLLOWING THE STUDIES AND DATA UPON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS
AUTHORIZED. THIS, OF COURSE, ADDS TO THE BURDEN THAT THE PUBLIC
MUST SHOULDER.

ONE OF MY OWN OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE PRESENT SYSTEM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS IS THAT THE PUBLIC DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN AS MEANINGFUL A WAY AS PROJECTS OF THIS SUBSTANCE AND MAGNITUDE DICTATE. TOO OFTEN THE PUBLIC'S ROLE IN THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS OCCURS SO LATE IN THE PROCEDURE AS TO PUT THEM AT A DISTINCT DISADVANTAGE. BY THAT TIME, THE CORPS HAS DEVELOPED A TREMENDOUS DOCUMENTATION IN SUPPORT OF OR IN OPPOSITION TO A PARTICULAR PROJECT. WE MUST INCORPORATE INTO THIS SYSTEM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT AN EARLIER STAGE.

THE THRUST OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE AND AN EARLIER ADDRESS CONCERNING THE ENVIRONMENT WAS THAT WE MUST DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. THIS MESSAGE, OF COURSE, APPLIES TO WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS. WE MUST CONSIDER SUCH PROJECTS IN THE TOTAL CONTEXT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND UTILIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT. WE MUST CONSIDER THE EFFECTS OF WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS ON ADJACENT LAND USE, POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, CONCENTRATION OF INDUSTRY, AND A WHOLE MYRIAD OF FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EITHER ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION OR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY. IT SHOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED AT THE OUTSET, HOWEVER, THAT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND ONE WHICH WILL TAKE DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT FROM ALL LEVELS OF OUR

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SOCIETY AND, OF COURSE, ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. WE ARE NOW COMING FULL CYCLE TO REALIZE THAT DECISION-MAKING REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT CANNOT BE LEFT SOLELY TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR EVEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WORKING WITH STATE GOVERNMENTS. TO ACHIEVE AN ENVIRONMENT OF QUALITY, WE MUST HAVE THE PARTICIPATION AND HELP OF ALL CITIZENS. YOUR ROLE, THEREFORE, IS NOT ONE OF WAITING FOR DECISIONS FROM GOVERNMENT. I WOULD HOPE CONGRESS WILL EXERCISE ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SUCH PARTICIPATION LEGALLY POSSIBLE AND THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION AND YOUR MEMBERS, AS CITIZENS, WILL ENDEAVOR TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEANINGFUL WAY.