

called “the most frustrating, most difficult problem of the entire effort.” TVA kept stalling and opposition from private interests arose. “TVA had moved in but wasn’t ready to build the dam,” Hortin said. “All the while the nation’s economic condition pressed hard on the people. There was hunger, people couldn’t get work, and the outlook was grim. TVA would say, ‘Someday we’ll build it.’ We wanted them to get it started. TVA was being called socialism, and a lot of unprintable things. But LTVA stayed out of that type rhetoric and petty politics. Our argument was pretty mercenary. We contended that TVA was building dams for other states, it was federal tax money being spent, and here we were at the heart of all this water, and our dam wasn’t being built!”

In January 1937, fate took a hand as nature demonstrated the need for a dam. Rain fell for 19 days. The Tennessee and Ohio rivers and their tributaries overflowed their banks. Multimillions of dollars were lost.

A crucial piece of legislation passed Congress on Feb. 16, 1938. Hortin received a telegram from Sen. Barkley reading: “Just retained, Gilbertsville, whole TVA appropriation.” That bill meant TVA’s appropriation wouldn’t be cut. Still TVA wouldn’t use the word, construction. Draffen was on a train bound for Washington to lobby for the bill when he received the news. He continued his journey and thanked each legislator who voted for it.

LTVA’s lobbying bore fruit on July 1, 1938 when Congress appropriated \$2.613 million for construction of the dam. Its total cost was \$116.2 million. “On that day the word construction was used for the first time,” Hortin said. “It was key; we had our dam!”

At the height of construction, 5,000 men from several states came to work on the dam. The economy boomed, and housing was needed for the influx of workers. TVA floated homes down the river to Gilbertsville from its worker village at Pickwick Dam and built a self-contained community with schools, administration offices, medical clinic and recreational facilities. That community, just south of old Gilbertsville, became known as “The Village.”

After the dam was completed, Draffen recruited Charles Hall to assist him in efforts to entice industry to locate in Calvert City. Hall wrote more than 1,000 letters touting the amenities Calvert City offered—cheap electricity, river, rail and highway transportation. Draffen and Hall reaped success in 1948 when the Pennsylvania Salt Manufacturing Company (now Arkema) announced it would build a plant near Altona. It opened in July 1949. Pittsburgh Metallurgical Company (now Calvert City Metals & Alloys) opened in November 1949. Industrialization had begun.

Predictions that Calvert City’s population would balloon from less than 300 to 10,000 by 1960 didn’t happen. However, industrialization continued with National Carbide of Air Reduction (now Carbide Industries) opening in January 1953, followed by BFGoodrich Chemical Company (now Lubrizol) and West Lake Chemicals. American Aniline and Extract Company (now Estron) opened in 1954; Airco Chemical Company (which later became Air Products and Chemicals and is now Evonik), and General Aniline and Film Corporation (now Ashland) opened in 1956. Other spin off companies include Wacker, Cymetech and many support businesses.

A few industries Draffen and Hall courted didn’t locate at Calvert City. Hall said General Tire, now closed, opted for Mayfield. Then there was Great Lakes Carbon Corporation owned by George Skakel, father of Ethel Kennedy. In a 1980 interview, the late Grand Rivers Mayor John Henry O’Bryan, said Luther Draffen brought Skakel to Grand Rivers to buy land for a plant. Great Lakes Carbon

bought more than 1,200 acres a little north-east of Grand Rivers from TVA and three private landowners. But in a letter to Hall dated April 3, 1952, Skakel said he regretted “the company had reluctantly decided to abandon its development plans.” Skakel held out hope that Great Lakes Carbon might build the plant later. But on Oct. 3, 1955, Skakel and his wife, Ann, were killed when their plane crashed.

Probably the most significant impact electricity from Kentucky Dam made on Marshall County was a higher standard of living for its people. In 2015, earnings in all industries averaged nearly \$55,000 annually. Last year, travel and recreation—much of it related to Kentucky Lake created by the dam—added \$74 million to the county’s economy and Calvert City added 2.994 million in payroll taxes to county coffers.

### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. LEAHY, Madam President, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit all news organizations and hit them hard at a time when they have rarely been so essential to the American people and our communities.

News organizations have had to severely trim their staffs, while coping, as we all have had to do, with the pandemic’s health threats and uncertainties. It is a great credit to our Fourth Estate that so many news organizations nonetheless have managed to produce such heroic work in meeting this vital challenge.

Most news outlets have had to transition to an online distribution model in distributing their reporting during this pandemic. These valiant efforts have included those by online-only news organizations such as “Vermont Digger,” in Vermont. The New York Times recently recognized the vital work of such Vermont news outlets as “Vermont Digger” and “Seven Days” in the face of these unprecedented challenges.

Vermont stands almost alone in the Nation in our State’s successful efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. Much of that can be attributed to the bold steps taken by State and local communities and leaders at all levels, including Governor Phil Scott, to follow the science in promoting mask wearing and social distancing. Sensible and responsible leadership, and strong and steady reporting by Vermont’s news organizations, have produced “a high degree of social trust,” as the Washington Post has reported.

Recently “Vermont Digger” was recognized by the Local Independent Online News Association for its local coverage of COVID-19, and that recognition is richly deserved.

Vermonters know that in troubling times like these, we fare best when we make the difficult but important decisions to protect our families, our neighbors, and our communities. This pandemic continues to rage, but I am proud that my fellow Vermonters are once again leading the Nation in our efforts to conquer out this virus.

### TRIBUTE TO NANCY EVERHART

Mr. LEAHY, Madam President, I would like to recognize Nancy Everhart on the occasion of her retirement from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Nancy Everhart has been a true Vermont leader in agriculture and conservation, dedicating her decades-long career to the protection of farmland and the viability of the farmers who rely on it. She retires with an extensive list of accomplishments. The passion she applies to her work has had a tremendous impact on the Vermont landscape, as well as our Nation’s agricultural future.

Nancy was a farmer first. As a strong pioneer of Vermont’s organic movement during the 1980s, she was among the first Vermonters to sell organic milk to her community. Her work and that of other like-minded farmers in Vermont were catalysts in the early organic movement that ultimately led me to introduce the Organic Food Production Act as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Enacted as part of the 1990 farm bill, that bill created the first-ever standards and label for what is now a \$50 billion industry. Even as she became a national leader in conservation, Nancy has still maintained a small, diversified, organic farm at her home in Marshfield, VT. Her personal experiences as a farmer have afforded her a unique perspective and credibility to bring to each phase of her career.

As the conservation director for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Nancy has led or contributed directly to the conservation of more than 77,000 acres across nearly 500 parcels of Vermont farmland. These projects have helped to keep Vermont farms viable by allowing farm owners to access substantial capital and benefit from their most valuable asset, their land. Those benefits, however, do not stop at the fence line. Nancy knows that investments in preserving working landscapes benefit the rural communities that surround them and contribute greatly to the tourist and outdoor economies of rural States like Vermont. They can be a bridge to the next generation, often providing young and beginning farmers the opportunity to overcome their biggest hurdle: accessing affordable farmland to start and grow their enterprise. When that succession of stewardship is broken and working lands fall out of production, it can exact an immeasurable price from the community.

Nancy’s decades of work have exemplified and brought home to Vermont exactly the outcomes that I envisioned when I worked to establish the Federal role for farmland protection in the 1990 and 1996 farm bills. Since that time, Nancy has drawn on her vast experience to provide counsel on how to expand that role and continually improve farmland conservation provisions, including most recently in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program—ACEP—provisions of the 2018 farm