Winnebago Bend near Sloan is a $1.3 million project to add water into a rapidly disappearing wetland. It too was programmed for FY 96 & 97 construction.

In addition to the improvement or creation of critical habitat, all of these projects would provide hunting, angling and outdoor recreation opportunities to Iowans along the Missouri River.

The Corps' report proposing these projects was completed in 1981. With nearly two decades of delays, the lack of habitat continues to frustrate efforts to maintain several fish species. It would be most unfortunate to lose the momentum that has developed as these projects have moved this close to construction.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (EMP)

EMP was also authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 and has become a model program for the restoration of fish and wildlife on big rivers. Its authorized funding is $19.4 million per year and it has been receiving that amount in recent years. It too is a program that has taken a long time to attain solid momentum, but is now providing increasing benefits. EMP contains two primary components; (1) habitat rehabilitation and enhancement projects (HREP) and (2) long-term resource monitoring (LTRM). The Administration's budget contains $15.6 million for EMP in FY 97, which is not devastating in itself. Our concern lies with the Corps' projections in FY 98, 99, and 00, which are $12.4 million, $8.7 million, and $9.8 million, respectively. Reductions of that magnitude will have serious adverse implications in Iowa.

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED HREPS IN IOWA ARE:

Bussey Lake dredging near Guttenberg—Dredging will improve the fishery by providing deeper water, diversity of habitat and wintering-over areas.

Brown's Lake restoration near Green Island—This area has been protected from sedimentation by dike improvements and a water control structure. A deeper channel through the project and dredging in the lake have improved the fishery, while the dredge spoil was collected on site to create terrestrial habitat. This project along with the improvements at Green Island will be beneficial for both hunting and fishing.

Big Timber backwater rehabilitation and pothole creation near Muscatine—Dredging at this site restored an area that was nearly completely filled in with sediment.

Lansing Big Lake side channel closures—This project is designed to decrease sedimentation and flow rates in the lake to maintain its currently very popular panfishery. We are currently proposing some follow-up work in Lansing Big Lake to further assure project objectives are obtained.

Iowa's Princeton HREP project near Princeton is hit the hardest by the proposed change in funding. This project is designed to create new wetlands and improve the dike system for waterfowl management. The construction contract was close to being let to a minority contractor. Our local DNR biologist was ready to issue a news release explaining to local hunters that Princeton would be closed this fall due to construction. The Corps is considering delaying construction until late 1997. Making this decision at the last minute is inefficient and will cost time and money if the Corps decides to shelve the project. Because of great interest in this project by local hunters and others who live along the river, the delay will cause many to become extremely upset.

Iowa's Lake Odessa EMP project near Wapello is currently undergoing planning, engineering, and design. The Corps has informed us that it will complete this work, but will not construct the project under current EMP authorization. The Lake Odessa HREP project would therefore only become reality if authorization for EMP is extended beyond 2002.

HREP projects for Huron Island near Burlington, Molo Slough near Dubuque, and Peosta Channel also near Dubuque were also programmed to be completed under the current EMP authorization. The Corps is now considering deletion of these projects completely from EMP.

The Long-Term Resource Monitoring (LTRM) element of EMP is collecting data on Mississippi River water quality, aquatic and floodplain habitat, microinvertebrates, and fisheries. LTRM also evaluates the physical, chemical, and biological responses of habitat projects. This program was designed to identify trends and support decisions about river management including such projects as the current navigation study.

Iowa DNR operates one of six monitoring stations that are located throughout the river. Iowa's station is in Bellevue and is staffed by six permanent employees and typically hires up to five seasonal workers during summer months. These are all state employees, but funding for their salaries and operations comes totally from federal EMP dollars. Reductions in the LTRM budget will likely occur because of overall EMP cutbacks, which means that Iowa's station in Bellevue and its employees will be affected. It is important that data gathering not be curtailed to the extent that the integrity of the data base created over the past several years is jeopardized. In addition, the loss of jobs at the station will impact the economy in Bellevue due to the loss of employment. Bellevue along with other cities along the Mississippi will see reduced recreational activity as the maintenance of the natural resources of the river are neglected.

Budget reductions are difficult, and we understand that there will be some impacts on programs that we believe to be important to the long term viability of the natural river systems. It appears that the Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation and Mississippi River Environmental Management Programs are expected by the Administration to bear proportionally greater budget reductions than other programs. We also fear that the North Central and Missouri River Divisions are taking a greater share of cuts than those in other parts of the country. This further harms Iowa projects. If budget reductions that are currently being proposed happen, Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation in Iowa will come to a complete halt, Mississippi River EMP habitat projects in Iowa will be delayed and some will be eliminated. The Bellevue monitoring station will face cuts that could mean its demise with the added cuts proposed in future years. As noted above, reductions in these efforts will have economic as well as natural resource consequences that should not be underestimated given the Corps' own study showing an annual value of recreation in the Upper Mississippi River basin of over $1 billion. We ask for your help to do whatever you can to assure these programs and their respective projects in Iowa are not forced to take on more than their fair share of setbacks.

Sincerely,

LARRY J. WILSON,
Director.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 5 additional minutes. How much time do I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Eight minutes 56 seconds.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent for 5 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, about a year ago the President appointed trustees for the Medicare fund to study Medicare, to project its problems, its solvency, and everything like that. A year ago, six trustees of the Medicare fund—and these are four people in the President's Cabinet and two citizens, one Republican and one Democrat, so altogether there would be five Democrats and one Republican—unanimously said that the Medicare program would be bankrupt in the year 2002. They also said that Congress should take immediate action to keep the long-term viability of Medicare. They asked the Republican Congress to take action to do that. We did that.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1995 is this 1,800-page bill, which took 13 committees over an 8-month period of time to put together, the first Balanced Budget Act passed by Congress in a quarter of a century, to balance the budget in 7 years. Part of this document is not only doing what President Clinton's trustees of the Medicare system asked us to do, to save it from bankruptcy, but we also gave senior citizens of America a choice that if they did not want to have traditional Medicare, we would pay for other forms of health care delivery. We would take their money and pay for it, so that they could have something if they wanted something different than Medicare. That is all in this document.

In November of last year, we presented the President of the United States not only the balanced budget, but also provisions to save Medicare, to strengthen Medicare, and to give people on Medicare, for the first time in 30 years, a choice of their medical care.

The President vetoed it. The President vetoed those Medicare reforms. He wanted people to believe that we were cutting Medicare. He was on television every day on these paid ads saying that ''Republicans are cutting Medicare.'' Under the Balanced Budget Act, Medicare would have grown at 7 percent every year. What we are spending on Medicare per beneficiary is $4,900 this year, and in 7 years we would have been spending $6,700 per Medicare recipient. Maybe it is even closer to $7,000 per Medicare recipient. So, obviously, we were not cutting anything. We were saving Medicare from bankruptcy. We were extending the life of it for another 9 or 10 years.

Well, the President vetoed it. One person is standing in the way of doing what his trustees said should be done, what the people want done, and what the Congress did. The President of the United States vetoed the first balanced budget act passed in a quarter of a century, balancing the budget in 7 years, and saving Medicare, as his trustees said. Well, the President kind of ignored what his trustees said.

But, more importantly, even before last year was out, we were finding out that Medicare was coming up short of expectations of what the income and outgo of it was, to a point of where it was going to be broke before the year 2002.

Senator PETE DOMENICI says that it is going to be May of the year 2001, just 6 years from now. Roland King, former chief actuary of the Health Care Financing Administration, says that it will run out in late 2000—that is 4 years from now—or early 2001, 5 years from now. There is a Richard S. Foster, who succeeded Mr. King as chief actuary, who said that the top officials at the Department of Health and Human Services would not give him permission to talk about this issue. What I am referring to here, Mr. President, is the New York Times article of today that is headlined ''New Medicare Trust Fund Data Shows Unusually Large Shortfalls.'' The subheadline is: ''Program is Solvent, But Gap Shows Weakening.''

What has happened in the 12 months since the last report? Instead of Medicare starting to spend out more than the income in 1996, it actually started to happen in 1995, and it is happening at a much faster rate than we anticipated. So, Medicare will be broke not in 7 years, not in 6 years, but maybe in 5 years.

What is kind of special about this article is this. Normally this report would be out in April every year by the trustees. It is not out yet, I imagine because it is an election year. This is bad news for this administration, which was told 12 months ago that Medicare was going to be bankrupt in the year 2002, and they vetoed the only bill presented to extend the life of it. Not only that, but the situation is worse than the report said it was 12 months ago.

It says here that Chris Jennings, a special assistant to President Clinton for health policy, said today that the new numbers were not surprising: ''They indicate the need to move forward to balance the budget and enact some changes in Medicare that will strengthen the trust fund. Republicans and Democrats should work together to address the problem.''

Get that—''Republicans and Democrats should work together to address the problem.'' Immediately after Labor Day last year, constantly Senator DOLE and Speaker GINGRICH were inviting the White House to sit down and reach some sort of an agreement with us, a long time before we ever put this together and finally passed it. But, no, they did not want to sit down and talk about it. Yet, we are being admonished by the White House that ''Republicans and Democrats should work together to address the problem.''

A letter to Congress last week from Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin suggested that Congress and the administration resume discussions to reach an agreement on Medicare and the budget. Well, we do not have that report. They say it might come out in June or July.

Do you know what they are blaming for the delay? The fact that we had snow in January. We have snow every January in the Midwest, and it does not slow down the deadlines that we have to get reports out. But the longer this report can languish in the bureaucracy downtown, as long as some faceless bureaucrat can keep it under control, then it is less out there for public consideration and for the shots that it is going to take because of that.

Mr. President, I hope that the administration will forget the fact that we had snow in January, because what is news about that? This report that is supposed to be issued in April, that was issued in April of last year, would be issued, and I will bet we will see the same Presidential appointees to the trustees tell us that Congress should do something about it. Well, if you ever wonder as part of the cynical public about Washington, DC whether Congress will ever balance the budget, it is right here in these 1,800 pages. We passed that last year. The President vetoed it. It saved Medicare from bankruptcy. We would not have to be dealing with this issue. Instead of Senator DOMENICI saying that we will run out of money in May of the year 2001, we would be saving that deadline for another decade down the road.

I hope, Mr. President, that the President of the United States will come forth with his report. The longer you wait to make public bad news, the worse it is for the people that are giving the bad news.

It would seem to me that the right thing to do is to simply state what the facts are, and the fact is that the situation with Medicare is much worse. It could be bankrupt in 5 more years—at the most, 6 years—and the situation is deteriorating considerably because this administration vetoed the bill that we passed last year to save Medicare.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FAIRCLOTH). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OUR PRESIDENT AND EARTH DAY

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I thank the Chair very much for recognizing me, and I will not belabor this issue very long. I know the Senate is leaving early this afternoon, and I do not want to delay the departure of our staff members who have been so loyal in helping us this afternoon and today. It has been an interesting day in the U.S. Senate.

I just was listening to one of the monitors and watching one of the monitors. I happened to note my very, very good friend from Iowa, the Honorable Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY, a wonderful long-time friend of mine, someone I have worked with very closely on the issues of oversight and overstepping of the Internal Revenue Service, of defense spending, which we thought at the time had gotten out of hand and was very unfair. We worked on several issues over these years together. I look forward to the remainder of my term in working with him further on various matters that affect our respective States and certainly our great country.

But I was a little taken aback when my friend from Iowa got up and started talking about our President, Earth Day, and what happened yesterday nearby, just a few miles away, I think, on the upper reaches of the Potomac River. My friend from Iowa sort of took our President to task and the Vice President to task I guess for even appearing at an Earth Day event. I do not know what his concern was. But if in fact the President did mention that the other political party's proposals on some of our environmental concerns were in fact lacking, then, Mr. President, I am going to have to disagree with my friend from Iowa, and I am going to have to, yes, agree with our President. For example, legislation recently circulated to rewrite the Clean Air Act by our good friends on the other side of the aisle would repeal the toxic air pollution standards and would absolutely cripple the enforcement of the Clean Air Act.

I do not think that is a piece of legislation we can go to future generations with and say we were very proud of ourselves when we attempted to cripple the enforcement of the Clean Air Act.

I think our President was right when he said that there is a difference between the two political parties and the way that they look at the environment and legislation that would perhaps undo all of the progress that has been made in cleaning up the air we breathe under the Clean Air Act over the last 25 years.

Some 25 years ago, when I first came to the House of Representatives as a young Member, as a new Member of that great body, I remember during that time I had three small sons, and from time to time on a Sunday afternoon or Saturday afternoon, perhaps, we would get a fishing pole or swimming suit and we would go down to the banks of the Potomac River, and I will never forget—and this was not long ago—there were signs up and down the banks of the Potomac River: no swimming allowed; do not eat any fish, the fish will be contaminated if caught in this river.

Mr. President, in this quarter of a century what we have done as a body, Republicans and Democrats alike, has not only helped to clean up that river, but we are helping today to clean up our air, and we cannot make a retreat, especially in a political year when it might have a short-term appeal to