

our appropriations subcommittee for VA and HUD today. We had before us the Secretary of the agency, Secretary Brown. We showed him the budget projections. This chart shows what the Congress' budget projection was last year. This green line shows a flat line across here.

Actually, we raised that to this level. Last year the Secretary said holding the Veterans' Administration budget flat through 2002 would be devastating; hospitals would be closed, veterans would not be served, there would be tremendous hardship, the system could not operate. He said the system could not operate with flat appropriations, even though the number of veterans is declining.

So I asked him what would happen, because this is the Clinton projection. These are the Clinton administration numbers for the Veterans' Administration budget, going up here in 1997, one more year, and then just plummeting, plummeting by more than \$3 billion a year out of just slightly over a \$16 billion budget. This, coming down according to the CBO, this would be just around \$13 billion or less for the Veterans' Administration.

The Secretary said he could not live with, and the veterans could not be served by, that budget. So I asked him if he were going to send out the e-mail messages and statements in pay stubs that he had sent to the employees of the VA last year when we proposed this budget. He said no. I asked him why not. He said, because the President has personally assured him he will negotiate the budget with him and take care of the veterans.

I asked him, I said, "Are you concerned that the President is going to live with that budget number that shows the budget plummeting for VA?" He indicated to me that he had no concern whatsoever that the Veterans' Administration budget would fall like that, because the President promised to negotiate with him.

I had to ask the question, and I ask it again. Who is the President fooling? Is he fooling the taxpayers and Congress when he proposes a budget like that that purports to cut it and cut the budget for the Veterans' Administration a total of \$13 billion in this period? Or is he fooling the veterans by telling them, do not worry, we will keep spending up however high it needs to go? Whichever way it goes, it has to call into question whether the President is serious about these budget negotiations. He said that he wants to balance the budget.

We have the President on record and we have OMB on record as saying they want to balance the budget. How are they going to do it? Well, they have some very draconian cuts in their appropriated spending accounts. This red line shows how sharply those cuts are going to be made. This is the President's entire budget, and he hopes to get to a balance in 2002 by cutting it like that.

Part of those cuts are reflected in this precipitous cut in the VA budget, showing this for the Veterans' Administration only. But he is telling the people, the constituents of the Veterans' Administration, or they believe he is saying, "Don't worry, we'll negotiate with you a good budget and take care of you."

We have the promise, on the one hand, of OMB that this is a meaningful budget that shows a reduction of appropriated spending sufficient to balance the budget in the year 2002 under President Clinton's plan. On the other hand, we have the assurance, the confidence of one of the agency administrators whose budget is going to be slashed that it will not be slashed. That is the best of both possible worlds.

For the vast majority of American citizens who want to see a balanced budget, you have these numbers in a budget, but it is really a no pain-no gain situation, because you tell the people who will be directly affected, "Don't worry because we don't mean this; don't worry, the budget's not going to come down like that."

Mr. President, what they must be telling us is it is all for show. It sounds good to tell the American people we are going to balance the budget, but we can sure get out and get the word to all of the people who depend upon those particular agencies, "Don't worry, your agency is not being cut; your agency is not going to suffer any reductions."

Mr. President, I think the issue of credibility and character are going to be very important in this fall's election, and I think this budget flimflam tells a lot. I think it raises questions about the honesty of the plan that we are being presented on behalf of the Clinton administration by OMB. They would like us to think the budget is going to be balanced, but they assure the people in the area, plan for the cuts, that that \$13 billion will not be cut out of the VA budget. Is it going to be cut someplace else? I doubt they will be willing to say someplace else will be cut even more.

I thank the Chair. I note several colleagues wishing to speak. I yield the floor.

Mr. COHEN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

#### AMENDMENT TO THE HISTORIC CHATTAHOOCHEE COMPACT

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 345, H.R. 2064.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2064) to grant consent of Congress to an amendment of the Historic Chattahoochee Compact between the States of Alabama and Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be deemed read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be placed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 2064) was deemed read the third time and passed.

#### THE CALENDAR

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 366, H.R. 1743, Calendar No. 367, H.R. 2243, and Calendar No. 375, S. 811, en bloc; further, I ask unanimous consent that reported amendments to the text, as may appear, be agreed to, the bills be deemed read a third time, passed, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, en bloc, and that any statements relating to these measures be placed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

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

#### THE WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT OF 1984 AMENDMENT ACT OF 1996

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill (H.R. 1743) to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to extend the authorizations of appropriations through fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

##### SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Section 102 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10301) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting ", productivity of natural resources and agricultural systems," after "environmental quality";

(2) in paragraph (6), by striking "and" at the end;

(3) in paragraph (7), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

"(8) long-term planning and policy development are essential to ensure the availability of an abundant supply of high quality water for domestic and other use; and

"(9) the States must have the research and problem-solving capacity necessary to effectively manage their water resources."

##### SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

Section 103 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10302) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5)—

(A) by striking "to"; and

(B) by striking "and" at the end;

(2) in paragraph (6), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(7) encourage long-term planning and research to meet future water management, quality, and supply challenges."

**SEC. 3. GRANTS; MATCHING FUNDS.**

Section 104(c) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303(c)) is amended by striking "one non-Federal dollar" and all that follows through "thereafter" and inserting "2 non-Federal dollars for every 1 Federal dollar".

**SEC. 4. GENERAL AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

Section 104(f)(1) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303(f)(1)) is amended by striking "of \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years ending September 30, 1989, through September 30, 1995," and inserting "of \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 1996, \$7,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1997 and 1998, and \$9,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1999 and 2000".

**SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR RESEARCH FOCUSED ON WATER PROBLEMS OF INTERSTATE NATURE.**

The first sentence of section 104(f)(1) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303(g)(1)) is amended by striking "of \$5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995" and inserting "of \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1996 through 2000".

**SEC. 6. COORDINATION.**

Section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(h) COORDINATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out this Act, the Secretary—

"(A) shall encourage other Federal departments, agencies (including agencies within the Department of the Interior), and instrumentalities to use and take advantage of the expertise and capabilities that are available through the institutes established by this section, on a cooperative or other basis;

"(B) shall encourage cooperation and coordination with other Federal programs concerned with water resources problems and issues;

"(C) may enter into contracts, cooperative agreements, and other transactions without regard to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5);

"(D) may accept funds from other Federal departments, agencies (including agencies within the Department of the Interior), and instrumentalities to pay for and add to grants made, and contracts entered into, by the Secretary;

"(E) may promulgate such regulations as the Secretary considers appropriate; and

"(F) may support a program of internships for qualified individuals at the undergraduate and graduate levels to carry out the educational and training objectives of this Act.

"(2) REPORT.—The Secretary shall report to Congress annually on coordination efforts with other Federal departments, agencies, and instrumentalities under paragraph (1).

"(3) RELATIONSHIP TO STATE RIGHTS.—Nothing in this Act shall preempt the rights and authorities of any State with respect to its water resources or management of those resources."

The committee amendment was agreed to.

The bill (H.R. 1743) was deemed read the third time and passed.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, today the Senate considers H.R. 1743, a bill to reauthorize the Water Resources Research Act of 1984, as amended. This legislation was adopted unanimously by the House of Representatives on October 17, 1995. With the strong support of Senators KEMPTHORNE, THOMAS, and REID, the Committee on Environment and Public Works approved the measure with an amendment on March 28 of this year.

The legislation, which enjoys broad bipartisan support, extends the author- ization for the State Water Resources

Research Institutes for 5 years. Fifty-four of these institutes have been established at land grant universities in each of the 50 States, Washington, DC, and 3 of the territories.

These institutes are a primary link between the academic community, the water-related research and regulatory personnel in our State and Federal agencies, and various interests in the private sector. The institutes provide a mechanism for promoting State, regional, and national coordination of water resources research and training. They also serve as a network to facilitate research coordination and information transfer. Their programs are coordinated with the general guidance of the Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. President, this is a popular program because research from the water institutes is often directed at finding solutions to particular water problems at the local or regional level. Research results from the program are often applied to real-world problems in water management. In my own State, the University of Rhode Island's Water Resources Center has used this program to further ground water resources management and protection, wetlands preservation, and the understanding of the effects of air pollutant deposition on lakes and streams.

Nationally, this program is designed to address water resource management problems such as: the abundance and quality of water supplies, the sources of water contaminants and methods of remediation, and the training of research scientists, engineers, and technicians. In addition to continuing the general authority for the institutes, this bill extends authorization for the awarding of funds for research projects.

Mr. President, let me conclude by explaining the authorization of appropriations made in this bill. The 1984 act authorized \$10 million annually to cover all general water resources research for the institutes. H.R. 1743, as approved by the House and reported by the committee, authorizes the institutional grants program at lower levels. Beginning with fiscal year 1996, \$5 million is authorized. For fiscal years 1997 and 1998, \$7 million is authorized. For fiscal years 1999 and 2000, \$9 million is authorized. This provides the institutional grant program with a 5-year authorization total of \$37 million.

Finally, the Committee on Environment and Public Works unanimously adopted an amendment offered by Senator THOMAS to add funding for research focused exclusively on water problems of an interstate nature. For interstate research, the bill authorizes \$3 million for each of the fiscal years 1996 through 2000, for a total of \$15 million.

Mr. President, the Water Resources Research Program authorized by H.R. 1743 is a cost-effective program. Costs of operating the program are shared with non-Federal interests. The program provides valuable research that is useful to State and local water man-

agers throughout the Nation. This program has given us years of valuable service and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1743.

**THE TRINITY RIVER BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1996**

The bill (H.R. 2243) to amend the Trinity River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Act of 1984, to extend for 3 years the availability of moneys for the restoration of fish and wildlife in the Trinity River, and for other purposes, was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, H.R. 2243, a bill to reauthorize and amend Public Law 98-541, the 1984 Trinity River Restoration Program, is a truly bipartisan piece of legislation. Introduced by Representative RIGGS, H.R. 2243 passed the House by a vote of 412 to 0 on December 12, 1995. The bill would extend funding authority for Trinity River basin restoration programs through fiscal year 1998. In addition, H.R. 2243 would expand the management plan to aid in the resumption of commercial and recreational fishing, and increase the task force by five members to include representatives from commercial and recreational fishing interests, two native American tribes, and the timber industry. The administration supports H.R. 2243.

To date, restoration efforts in the Trinity River basin have included the modernization of the Lewiston hatchery, the construction of the Buckhorn Debris Dam, sediment collection pools in the Grass Valley Creek, and the purchase of 17,000 acres of highly erodible land in the Grass Valley Watershed. Other habitat restoration efforts are underway to encourage natural fish spawning and rearing, including replacement of spawning gravel below the Lewiston Dam, reestablishment of meander channels, dredging of pools in the Trinity River, and feather-tapering the river's edges.

Reauthorization of Public Law 98-541 will continue the restoration of the Grass Valley Creek Watershed, control sediment on tributary watersheds, restore the South Forks Trinity River fish habitat, and implement a wildlife management program. These efforts will contribute to rebuilding the populations of salmon and trout, which are important to commercial, recreational, and tribal fishing interests.

**THE WATER DESALINIZATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1996**

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill (S. 811) to authorize research into the desalinization and reclamation of water and authorize a program for States, cities, or qualifying agencies desiring to own and operate a water desalinization or reclamation facility to develop such facilities, and for other