

which they can be proud. I applaud Mr. Shearer and his colleague's efforts in helping to memorialize the sacrifice that was made by our Korean war veterans. I am proud to stand in salute of a veteran who continues to honor the memories of those soldiers who gave their lives in the Korean war.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. WALTER H. CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2158) making appropriations for the Departments of Veter-

ans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes:

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this bill and would like to commend Chairman LEWIS and the ranking member, Mr. STOKES, for their diligent work on the important programs covered in this legislation.

As a strong supporter of NASA's Mission to Planet Earth, I am very pleased that the bill before us provides full funding for this critically important program.

Mission to Planet Earth will expand our knowledge of ourselves, our Earth and its incredibly complex environmental systems. I am convinced that we should never shrink from the opportunity to grasp such critically important information.

But MTPE will be more than a search for knowledge. With its series of orbiting satellites, set to begin launching next year, Mission to Planet Earth's ability to accurately monitor and predict long-term climate variability will have

great benefits for large sectors of our economy, including such diverse industries as agriculture, financial services, insurance, and disaster management.

The ability to predict droughts, floods, and other cataclysmic natural events will reap huge benefits in lives and dollars for years to come. MTPE information will not only be useful for long-range forecasting, but will have daily applications as well. In agriculture, to use one example, farmers will be better able to anticipate irrigation and harvesting needs, and disease control and eradication requirements.

As NASA programs add to our knowledge of the entire solar system—with the spectacular exploits on Mars by *Sojourner* as the most recent example—we must not lose sight of all that we still do not know about our own glorious world. MTPE will help fill in some of those gaps about our environmental systems, improving our quality of life here on Earth while we continue our exploration of the stars and planets