

channels, and flood control structures, and other water development projects dramatically alter the nation's landscapes. Michael Grunwald's Sunday, September 10, 2000 story made this point very clear that the debate over whether the Corps:

... should grow or shrink, and how much it should shift its focus from construction projects to restoration project. . . may not be the sexiest of Beltway brawls, but it will have a dramatic effect on America. Corps levees and floodwalls protect millions of homes, farms and businesses. Its coastal ports and barge channels carry 2 billion tons of freight annually. Its dams generate one-fourth of America's hydroelectric power. Its water recreation sites attract more visitors than the National Park Service's. Its land holdings would cover Vermont and New Hampshire. But the Corps may have its greatest impact on nature . . . So the future direction of the Corps will help determine the future health of America's environment.

Furthermore, this major government program costs federal taxpayers billions of dollars each year, and unfortunately, there have been times when economically unjustified activities have made it through to construction. While there are heartening signs of reform in the Corps Civil Works program, Congress should be working to create an independent process to help affirm when the Corps gets it right and help to provide a means for identifying problems before taxpayer funded construction investments are made. Today we begin that work in earnest.

Mr. President, I feel that requiring independent review of large and controversial Corps projects is a practical first step down the road to a reformed Corps of Engineers. Independent review would catch mistakes by Corps planners, deter any potential bad behavior by Corps officials to justify questionable projects, and would provide planners desperately needed support against the never ending pressure of project boosters. Those boosters, Mr. President, include Congressional interests, which is why I believe that this body needs to champion reform—to end the perception that Corps projects are all pork and no substance. As Mike Grunwald's article on Monday, September 11, 2000 states:

Water projects are a traditional coin of the realm on Capitol Hill, offering members of Congress jobs, contracts and other benefits for their constituents and campaign contributors—as well as ribbon cutting opportunities for themselves. In fact, the Corps budget consists almost entirely of projects requested by individual lawmakers, then approved by the Corps; the agency has almost no discretionary funds of its own.

I wish it were the case, Mr. President, that I could argue that additional oversight were not needed, but unfortunately, I see that there is need for additional scrutiny. In the Upper Mississippi there is troubling evidence of abuse. There is troubling evidence from whistleblowers that senior Corps officials, under pressure from barge interests, ordered their subordinates to exaggerate demand for barges in order to justify new Mississippi River locks. This is a matter which is still under investigation, and I hope that no evi-

dence of wrongdoing will ultimately be found. Adequate assessment of the environmental impacts of barges is also very important. I am also concerned that the Corps' assessment of the environmental impacts of additional barges does not adequately assess the impacts of barge movements on fish, backwaters and aquatic plants. We should not gamble with the environmental health of the river. If we allow more barges on the Mississippi, we must be sure the environmental impacts of those barges are fully mitigated.

I am raising this issue principally because I believe that Congress should act to restore trust in the Corps if we are going to complete an unbiased assessment of navigation needs. The first step in restoring that trust is restoring the credibility of the Corps' decision-making process. We must remove the cloud hanging over the Corps. There is a basic conflict of interest here, and Mike Grunwald's story on Wednesday, September 11, 2000, again in the Washington Post, makes this clear:

The same agency that evaluates the proposed water projects gets to work on the ones it deems worthwhile. If the analysis concludes that the economic costs of a project outweigh its benefits, or that the ecological damage of a project is too extreme, then the Corps loses a potential job.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, Congress now finds itself having to reset the scales to make economic benefits and environmental restoration co-equal goals of project planning. Our rivers serve many masters—barge owners as well as bass fisherman—and the Corps' planning process should reflect the diverse demands we place on them. I want to make sure that future Corps projects no longer fail to produce predicted benefits, stop costing more than the Corps estimated, and do not have unanticipated environmental impacts. In the future, we must monitor the result of projects so that we can learn from our mistakes and, when possible, correct them. We should impose a system of peer review as soon as possible and consider other comprehensive reforms. In a first step toward full evaluation of projects, I have committed myself to making Corps reform a priority in the next year and in the 107th Congress. The agreement we have reached today ensures that this Senate will also make it a priority.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there be a period for the transaction of routine morning business, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. *****
-Name: -Payroll No. -Folios: -Date:
-Subformat:

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS NATIONAL BLOOD APPEAL

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, we are currently facing one of the worst blood shortages in history, and I im-

plure the citizens of this fine nation to volunteer to be a blood donor. Across the country hospitals are having to postpone life saving operations because of the lack of blood. Just the other day, the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston had to postpone a liver transplant because it lacked the necessary blood supply to perform the surgery. This is simply not acceptable.

On September 19, 2000, Dr. Bernadine Healy, president and CEO of the American Red Cross, made the following statement stressing the critical need for blood donations. I feel that it is essential that we heed Dr. Healy's advice, and I ask unanimous consent that her statement be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT BY DR. BERNAIDINE HEALY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2000, AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD SUPPLY PRESS CONFERENCE

At this moment, the nation's blood supply is in critically short supply. We could not practice modern medicine without blood. Right now, the medical care of patients is being altered, postponed or canceled because the blood they need is not available. This silent savior in many medical emergencies is in short supply.

Blood is a critical link in the chain of health care nationwide. Together, the American Red Cross and the hundreds of independent blood centers maintain the strength of that link providing blood to patients in need. But that link is weak, and the chain of caring is being stretched to its limit.

Our role as blood bankers is an important one and we take our responsibilities very seriously. Every donor provides a generous gift of life and we recognize that gift as part of a precious national resource. We are now facing a time when the demand for this resource has grown such that it is outpacing our ability to provide adequate supplies.

In August 1999, the Red Cross collected about 16,700 units of blood per day. In August 2000, we collected nearly 17,300 units of blood daily—an increase of 3 percent. However, while collections have increased, so too has distribution. In August 1999, we distributed more than 14,700 units of blood each day. In August 2000, we distributed nearly 17,000 units each day, a 14 percent increase for that one month.

The American Red Cross believes we need a three-day inventory available—about 80,000 units—which enables us to provide an uninterrupted supply of blood to patients in need. However, for the entire summer, the Red Cross has operated on little more than a two-day supply.

Last Friday, our national inventory plummeted to 36,000 units of blood, and we consider 50,000 units to be a critical inventory level. Thirty-four of our thirty-six blood regions nationwide are in urgent need of blood donations. Many of our regions are being forced to ask local hospitals to postpone elective surgeries, especially if the patient in question has type O blood because the demand is greatest for this type.

An increase in the population, aging, growing numbers of medical procedures and more complex surgeries that were not possible years ago have contributed to this increase in demand. Patient undergoing chemotherapy and infants in neonatal care need blood. So do accident victims and those undergoing transplants. Blood is always, everywhere in need.