

from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 405 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Akaka	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Harkin	Pryor
Bayh	Inouye	Reed
Bingaman	Johnson	Reid
Boxer	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Brown	Kerry	Salazar
Byrd	Klobuchar	Sanders
Cantwell	Kohl	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Smith
Carper	Lautenberg	Snowe
Casey	Leahy	Specter
Cochran	Levin	Stabenow
Coleman	Lieberman	Stevens
Collins	Lincoln	Tester
Conrad	Lugar	Voinovich
Craig	Menendez	Webb
Dorgan	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feingold	Nelson (FL)	

NAYS—37

Alexander	Domenici	Martinez
Allard	Ensign	McCaskill
Barrasso	Enzi	McConnell
Bennett	Graham	Murkowski
Bond	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Gregg	Sessions
Chambliss	Hagel	Shelby
Coburn	Hatch	Sununu
Corker	Hutchison	Thune
Cornyn	Inhofe	Vitter
Crapo	Isakson	Warner
DeMint	Kyl	
Dole	Lott	

NOT VOTING—7

Biden	Clinton	Obama
Brownback	Dodd	
Bunning	McCain	

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. BROWN. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT
AGREEMENT—H.R. 1495

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, November 7, when the President's veto message on H.R. 1495 is received, it be considered as having been read, spread in full in the Journal, and printed in the RECORD; that there then be 3 hours of debate on the message with the time divided as follows: 45 minutes each for Senators BOXER and INHOFE, 90 minutes under the control of the Republican leader or his designee; that upon the use or yielding back of time today, the message be set aside to occur following morning business tomorrow morning, Thursday, November 8, at which time there be a total of 30 minutes remaining for debate, with 7½ minutes each for Senators BOXER and INHOFE and 15 minutes for the Republican leader or

his designee; that upon the use or yielding back of time, with no further intervening action, the Senate proceed to vote passage of the bill, the objections of the President notwithstanding.

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

The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor to urge my colleagues to override the President's veto of this important bill. There are many colleagues who want to speak tonight on the subject of WRDA, because this has been a team effort. Senator BOXER, the chairman of the committee, along with Senator INHOFE, ranking member, have worked hard and diligently to put a bill together which the vast majority of us support, and many colleagues are here tonight to speak. I will be very brief.

I want to speak about this bill because it is so critical to Louisiana. It is critical for us to give a green light to the people of south Louisiana and to the gulf coast who are still struggling to rebuild and put the pieces of their shattered lives back together because of the unprecedented two-punch storm—Katrina and Rita—and the breaking of the Federal levee system that should have held but didn't. We saw 285,000 homes destroyed. Because of the fires in California, as horrific as they were, screaming out of the mountains with the Santa Ana winds and scorching homes and neighborhoods, 1,600 homes were lost. Thousands of families were displaced and some businesses destroyed. But compared to Katrina and Rita, which is now 2 years in the past but is very close in the memory and hearts of the people still living there, we have to continue to remind ourselves and the Nation, it was 285,000 homes destroyed, unprecedented in the history of this Nation.

This bill in place lays a foundation for us to build on. It lays a foundation for security and prosperity. Frankly, without it, our long-term recovery is in jeopardy. This bill will authorize, not fund, about \$7 billion in critical water infrastructure projects, the first real piece of Louisiana coastal restoration effort, the closing of a shipping channel that was literally devastating to the parish in which it lies, St. Bernard Parish. Every home was destroyed in that parish; 67,000 people who lived there saw their lives and businesses destroyed when the levees supporting this commercial channel failed. There were levees throughout the metropolitan area that failed. This bill begins to lay a foundation for coastal restoration, to restore levees, to close the Mississippi Gulf outlet channel we refer to as Mr. Go, establishing for the first time hurricane protection along some southern parishes, Lafourche and Terrebonne, which we don't hear very much about because everybody focuses on New Orleans. We don't hear about Lafourche and Terrebonne and Iberia and Cameron. These are parishes that have hundreds of thousands of people

who live there and support the commerce of this Nation disproportionate to their number. This is where the pipelines are. This is where much of the energy infrastructure is for the Nation. It is these places we want to preserve for the future.

That is why Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER and the members of their committee—Senator VITTER represents us on this authorizing committee—have done an outstanding job in pulling together these projects. I don't know why the President chose this bill to try to reassume the mantle of fiscal responsibility, but he picked the wrong bill. As my colleagues will explain, it is fiscally responsible to pass a framework, a guideline, a limit on these projects. That is what WRDA does.

For the Nation it is important we invest in critical infrastructure. I don't like to make these comparisons on everything, but it is worth noting that we are now spending \$120 billion this year in Iraq. We are spending \$2.3 billion a week. It is hard for me to go home to Louisiana and explain why we can't come up with \$7 billion in authorizations for projects that are going to last over the next 20 or 30 years. We still have to go back and get the funding, but without authorization, we can't get started.

I hope my colleagues will join me in a strong override. The House did so last night. I look forward to the Senate overriding the President's veto of this important bill.

I retain the remainder of my time.

WATER RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the President's veto message on H.R. 1495, which under the previous order is considered read and spread in full upon the Journal.

The message from the President to the House of Representatives is as follows:

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1495, the "Water Resources Development Act of 2007."

This bill lacks fiscal discipline. I fully support funding for water resources projects that will yield high economic and environmental returns to the Nation and each year my budget has proposed reasonable and responsible funding, including \$4.9 billion for 2008, to support the Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) main missions. However, this authorization bill makes promises to local communities that the Congress does not have a track record of keeping. The House of Representatives took a \$15 billion bill into negotiations with a \$14 billion bill from the Senate and instead of splitting the difference, emerged with a Washington compromise that costs over \$23 billion. This is not fiscally responsible, particularly when local communities have

been waiting for funding for projects already in the pipeline. The bill's excessive authorization for over 900 projects and programs exacerbates the massive backlog of ongoing Corps construction projects, which will require an additional \$38 billion in future appropriations to complete.

This bill does not set priorities. The authorization and funding of Federal water resources projects should be focused on those projects with the greatest merit that are also a Federal responsibility. My Administration has repeatedly urged the Congress to authorize only those projects and programs that provide a high return on investment and are within the three main missions of the Corps' civil works program: facilitating commercial navigation, reducing the risk of damage from floods and storms, and restoring aquatic ecosystems. This bill does not achieve that goal. This bill promises hundreds of earmarks and hinders the Corps' ability to fulfill the Nation's critical water resources needs—including hurricane protection for greater New Orleans, flood damage reduction for Sacramento, and restoration of the Everglades—while diverting resources from the significant investments needed to maintain existing Federal water infrastructure. American taxpayers should not be asked to support a pork-barrel system of Federal authorization and funding where a project's merit is an afterthought.

I urge the Congress to send me a fiscally responsible bill that sets priorities. Americans sent us to Washington to achieve results and be good stewards of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars. This bill violates that fundamental commitment. For the reasons outlined above, I must veto H.R. 1495.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 2, 2007.

The Senate proceeded to reconsider the bill (H.R. 1495) to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes, returned to the House by the President on November 2, 2007, with his objections, and passed by the House of Representatives, on reconsideration, on November 6, 2007.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is my understanding, for clarification—because we have changed this a little bit—that our final decision is we are going to have an hour and a half kind of equally divided for those of us who are for overriding the veto, and then after that there will be an hour and a half for the other side, and we can divide our time as we want since we are agreeing on this. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma controls 45 minutes of his own, as does the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER.

Mr. INHOFE. Yes, that is fine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Ninety minutes is reserved for the Republican leader, and all of that time can be parceled out in a manner the Senator sees fit.

Mr. INHOFE. Good. The bottom line is, we are going to have an hour and a half to state why we think this is not a good veto and to override it.

Mr. President, I do have a number of people, Republicans, who want to come down and be heard who did not have a lot of time for preparation. I am very glad this is coming up right now, but, hopefully, they are still going to be around.

First of all, Senator BOND has been very helpful in this effort and is a very senior member of this committee that put this legislation together. I will yield him whatever time he shall use. Ten minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Oklahoma. I congratulate him and the Chair, Senator BOXER from California, for bringing this balanced and much needed bill to the floor so we may expeditiously override the veto.

Now WRDA is supposed to be authorized every 2 years, but there has not been a bill passed by this Congress during the entire administration. I have been working on this bill since 2001, so we are calling it WRDA 2001. The reason I have a direct interest in it is my State has nearly 1,000 miles of Missouri and Mississippi River frontage in addition to our lakes. Our communities rely on Corps projects for affordable water transportation, flood protection, energy production, environmental protection, and recreation opportunities.

When we talk about the environment—and in a minute I will be telling you why the environmental benefits of transportation by water are so important—my constituents know that Corps projects mean jobs, trade competitiveness, reliable and affordable energy, drinking water, and protection from floods which ruin property and kill people.

We are not alone because States up and down the Mississippi River, up and down the Missouri River, up and down the Ohio River, States in the central part of the Nation, depend on the lakes; and States on the coasts depend upon their ports as well. So this is truly a national bill. But I can speak to it directly from what I have seen and what I know in my part of the world.

I am delighted we are completing our long journey to permit modernization of the Mississippi River locks. These locks were built during the Great Depression, some 75 years ago, for paddlewheel boats—paddlewheel boats—that only pushed 600-foot barge tows. Now we have 1,200-foot barge tows trying to get through 600-foot locks. They have to double lock. And these locks are old.

I have spent a lot of time with the people who depend on these locks—the

farmers; shippers of cement, building materials, fertilizers, energy, coal, and petroleum that travel by water. They showed me and I have seen that these locks are not just leaking, sheets of water are coming through them. You can only use so much bailing wire and duct tape on a 75-year-old lock to keep it from going out.

Now one medium-sized 1,200-foot barge tow carries the same amount of commodities that 870 large semitrucks would carry. It would take a train car unit 2¼ miles long to carry the same load. But there is not room on our highways to put 870 trucks for every barge tow that would be used. The rails are filled. There is not room to put a 2¼ or 2¾ train on our railroads.

If we want to get our commodities to the market, if we want to have the most environmentally friendly and efficient means of transportation, we have to be able to move goods up the Mississippi River.

The locks in the bottleneck begin just above St. Louis. So all of the northern Midwest depends on those locks. The Mississippi River itself carries about 60 percent of the grain moving in international commerce, foreign trade—getting better prices for our farmers, keeping our rural communities healthy with good prices, and also lessening our balance of trade deficit. If you believe in selling our goods abroad, if you believe foreign sales are good for us—and I am strongly convinced they are—then we must have transportation.

We have had a long, arduous process to get the 2-year bill in 7 years, and we have been blessed with strong bipartisan support. From my part of the country, Senators GRASSLEY, HARKIN, DURBIN, and OBAMA have played key roles, and I express my gratitude.

Now the administration says they vetoed this bill because they say it is too big. If it were a normal 2-year bill, it would be big. But this is a 7-year bill, taking into account literally four different WRDA bills. If you total only three WRDA bills during the 5-year period—1996 to 2000—the authorization levels are comparable.

I think we must override the veto because this bill does not spend a dollar. It is an authorization bill. It says these projects are approved for consideration for funding. The Corps of Engineers has gone through extensive processes—engineering, public comment—to come to this point, and we are giving congressional blessings. This just adds projects to the list eligible. Put another way, it is a license to hunt. You still have to go out and hit the bird, and you cannot go beyond the limit. The limit is the budget.

The White House should know this bill spends not one dollar. The breakfast menu is larger, but the breakfast budget is unchanged. To say otherwise is to either misinform or purposely mislead.

The unfortunate reality for our State and the farmers and shippers in our

State is that water resources and water transportation do not seem to be a high priority of this administration, despite the expectation of supporters in 2000.

The previous administration was not supportive, and this one is no better. I know the White House staff will disagree, but OMB ought to try to go out and talk to the people who live in our part of the country. There are many areas where these projects are needed.

In November of 2005, the Washington Times reported that President Bush noted during a press conference with Panamanian President Torrijos:

[I]t's in our nation's interest that this canal be modernized.

Well, I think that is a great idea: modernize the Panama Canal. But while we are at it, why not modernize our own shipping areas? The administration does not oppose modernizing the Social Security-aged locks on the Mississippi River built for paddlewheel boats, but they also have not endorsed it or lifted a finger to endorse it. Endorsement was reserved for upgrading the waterways in Panama. My colleagues and I believe our Midwestern exporters deserve as much consideration as Chinese exporters who transit the Panama Canal.

I could list the supporters of it: the National Corn Growers Association, Carpenters Union, Operating Union, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, scores of members of the Waterways Council, and a whole lot of hard-working folks in Missouri and Illinois with whom I have met.

Our staffs have worked tirelessly on this legislation—not for days or weeks but years. There are many who have worked hard. I thank Ruth Van Mark, Ken Kopocis, Angie Giancarlo, Joe-Ellen Darcy; and a very special thanks to the bipartisan staff support of a very good friend of mine, Let Mon Lee, who has worked on the committee.

The success of our economy and its people owes a great debt to the investments that were made by those who came before us.

I urge my colleagues to vote for investments that will provide opportunity, value, competitiveness, and growth to our future so our export growth will not be limited to exporting barges.

This, as shown on this chart, is what we are exporting. We are exporting the barges to countries in Latin America so they can ship efficiently, economically, in environmentally friendly waters and take markets away from American farmers.

My thanks to the committee and the staff of Environment and Public Works. We appreciate their work. I urge my colleagues to join with us and adopt this bill by a veto override.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, there will be other Members who want to

come down to speak. When that happens, if staff will remind me, I will interrupt my remarks in order to give them time.

But I want to approach this legislation a little bit differently. I could be standing here and saying some of the same things my good friend from Missouri said in terms of things that are in this authorization bill that are critical to my State of Oklahoma, but I think my State of Oklahoma already knows that. I already talked to them about it.

We have things in this bill, and they are not all projects that will be built, but these are projects that the Corps of Engineers has carefully gone through, prioritized, and determined should be done.

Let me give you an example. We have work on the most devastating Superfund site in America called Tar Creek in northern Oklahoma. That is something that is going to be addressed in this legislation. We are more than 50 percent through resolving that problem, but more needs to be done—things such as a lake called Arcadia Lake that is close to the central part of the State. The city of Edmond has been in not a lawsuit but a legal difference with the Corps of Engineers now for many years, and they were almost forced to pay several million dollars for water they never did receive. So a lot of this bill clarifies problems that are out there, and it is necessary.

I think the Senator from Missouri made it very clear, the last time we had a bill was the year 2000—7 years ago—and actually that bill, 7 years ago, was only a 1-year bill. A lot of people think it was a 2-year bill. It was a 1-year bill. We are supposed to have these every year or 2 years, but we have not had one.

Last year I can remember standing here on the floor, and I think we actually got it passed, but then we ran out of time before adjournment took place.

It is very difficult for me to do this because I love our President, but I think he has been ill advised in this case because, as has been pointed out by the Senator from Missouri, this bill does not spend a dime. For people to walk around—and I am doing quite a bit of time on talk radio to make sure the public is aware of this—this is an authorization bill.

In a minute, I am going to explain the history of authorization versus appropriations. I hope there are some people who are listening, particularly conservative people. The reason I say that—we are all rated around here for being conservative or liberal. I happen to be rated by the American Conservative Union, and several other organizations, not No. 2, I say to my friend from Colorado, not No. 3, but No. 1—the most conservative Member of the Senate. Yet I am standing here asking this Senate to override the President's veto of the authorization bill called WRDA.

Now I see my friend, the junior Senator from Louisiana, is wanting to

have some time. I will be glad to yield to him, and then I am going to come back and kind of go over some history at that time.

How much time would the Senator like? Ten minutes?

I yield the Senator 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I particularly thank my distinguished colleague from Oklahoma, the ranking member on the committee. I thank Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER and all of the committee members for all of their diligent work for many years, in fact, that has finally produced this very good and worthwhile WRDA bill which we are about to pass into law.

I stand as one of the two Senators from Louisiana very excited about this moment because this legislation is absolutely crucial for our recovery from Hurricanes Rita and Katrina and, indeed, for our survival as a coastal culture, as a coastal State, moving into the future. It is absolutely vital in that regard. I believe passage of this bill, including overriding the President's veto, is absolutely necessary for the Nation and the Congress to keep the very generous and very solemn commitment made to the people of Louisiana and of the gulf coast following Hurricanes Rita and Katrina. This bill is enormously important, and it has been a long time in coming.

While ordinarily a WRDA bill would be passed every other year, we haven't had one in many years to pass through the Congress. So, as a result, this is long overdue. This is the equivalent of two or three water resources bills combined.

The good news is that from our perspective, particularly dealing with Louisiana issues, we have used that time and that opportunity to improve the bill dramatically, even from the moment when I came to the Senate 3 years ago and started working on the committee on this bill to improve it dramatically and to include more measures for coastal restoration, coastal protection, and hurricane protection for our survival.

I want to make clear this isn't some parochial Louisiana matter. Even the provisions I care most deeply about have national importance and a national impact and truly are national priorities. Let me mention a few sets of numbers just to illustrate the point.

Thirty-three: That is the number of States that rely directly on the protection systems in Louisiana authorized in this bill for maritime commerce—import and export of goods—and, of course, that includes the entirety of the Midwest and particularly grain and other products from farmers in the Midwest.

Eighty: That is the percentage of domestically produced chemicals and petrochemicals that come from Louisiana and Texas vital to our economy. This bill is helping protect that economic infrastructure, that industry.

Twenty-six: That is the percent of seafood that comes from Louisiana waters and includes more shrimp, crawfish, and oysters than any other State.

Three million: That is the number of barrels of oil that could not be refined each day because of the shutdown of our refineries immediately after the hurricanes.

One dollar: It doesn't sound like much, but that is the extra amount that each of our constituents nationwide paid per gallon as a result of the 2005 hurricanes that hit Louisiana. Each gallon of gas used to take kids to school and to drive to work, farmers using it in their tractors, boats to ship imports and exports, airplanes to fly passengers and cargo, truckers to drive their loads across the Nation—\$1 a gallon extra because of that disruption, because of a lack of protection.

Mr. President, \$2.8 billion: That is the extra amount all of our constituents paid nationwide in just 1 week as a result of those gasoline price spikes.

Maybe the most important number is 4. That is from a commission, a study commissioned by FEMA. That is the amount of money saved: \$4 for every \$1 invested in mitigation and protection. That is a great savings for the future for the taxpayer.

So this is vitally important for my people in Louisiana, but it is vitally important to the Nation because of that direct connection, because of that direct impact of the hurricanes on the Nation's economic vitality, on the Federal Treasury that had to respond to the devastation of the hurricanes.

As I said, I am proud of the work all of us have done, including, as I served on the committee, on the conference committee, to fashion key provisions, taking into account the lessons of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, key provisions that are now in this bill.

Let me mention just a few. The Water Resources Council: That is a council and an integration team that would be verifying the Corps' work, the Corps' conclusions and findings in terms of the implementation of Louisiana projects. So we have experts from outside the Corps, from academia, from the realm of practicing engineers to work hand in glove with the Corps so that design mistakes such as those that led to the levee breaches never happen again.

True 100-year hurricane protection: As I grew up in the New Orleans area, I was told we had 100-year protection, but the day Katrina hit, it disclosed the fact that wasn't true. Now we will be building through this bill true 100-year hurricane protection, and I thank President Bush for his commitment to that and his commitment to ask for all of the funding necessary to do that.

Moving forward on higher levels of protection for populated areas, what we would call true category 5 protection: The Corps is currently looking at that, designing that, but this bill will move that effort forward in a major

way so we move forward with the design and implementation of that higher level of category 5 protection.

Coastal restoration: We can talk about levees and physical barriers and the storm surge all we want, but if we continue to lose our rich coastland, which is the buffer land from storms, we will never be able to win that fight. So the fight starts with restoring our coastal barrier islands and coastal buffer lands. In this bill we have \$4 billion worth of that authorized work, 17 separate projects for coastal restoration. Of all of the work I have done in this bill, I think beefing up that portion of it is what I am most proud of because when I came to the Senate, when I came to this committee, there was only about \$400 million dedicated to that coastal restoration, one specifically authorized project. Now there is \$4 billion and 17 authorized projects.

We can go on and on. Closing MRGO, the deadly hurricane highway which was directly related to so much of the catastrophic flooding in New Orleans; other important work around the State, work with regard to the Port of Iberia and improving hurricane and flood protection in Vermilion parish, work that is very crucial to the Calcasieu River to allow navigation in that area to go on and prosper; bank stabilization for the Quachita and Black Rivers in north Louisiana; other hurricane protection improvements in lower Jefferson and Lafourche Parish; studies to improve access to Vidalia, LA, and other areas; countless projects, countless examples of important work.

Then last, but certainly not least, something we have been waiting on, working toward for 15 years and more, which is the Morganza to the gulf hurricane protection project to bring protection for the first time to a vital area just west of New Orleans, a populated area rich in culture, seafood, economic production, economic vitality. This project has been developed by the Corps over 15 years and more. It should have been in the last WRDA bill. In fact, it was in the last WRDA bill but is subject to a chief's report, and then the Corps of Engineers missed its deadline for that chief's report. That is finally being fully authorized, moving forward in an aggressive fashion because of this WRDA bill.

So again, in closing, let me say, make no mistake about it; this bill is vitally important for Louisiana, for our people, for our continued recovery, for our survival. But I don't want that to come across as some narrow or parochial concern because it does touch all of America in terms of impact. If our gulf coast is devastated in the future, gasoline prices will spike far more than 2 years ago. Our economy will be disrupted far more than 2 years ago, and, yes, FEMA and the Federal Government will have to spend even more than 2 years ago to deal with such a future disaster.

This WRDA bill is long overdue. It is fully justified. I thank Senator INHOFE,

and all of the committee again for their very hard work as we move forward and finally pass this into law.

I yield the floor.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Louisiana. He has been an excellent member of the committee. He has certainly been looking out after the very serious problems that exist even today in his State of Louisiana, problems that exist as a result of Katrina and other things that were happening before, such as beach erosion and other problems they have.

I also thank Senator BOXER. We joke around about this a little bit. We are kind of opposites in terms of philosophies, but we do come together in agreement on the process we use in determining what should be done for infrastructure in this country.

Now, I said just a few minutes ago that I have what some would think is a distinction, and some would question that, but I am rated anyway as the most conservative member of the Senate, and here I am standing up asking my colleagues to join me in overriding a veto that the President should not have made. I think if there are any discerning people who really want to know why, it is pretty heavy lifting to follow this through, but I think it is important to do that.

There are some things that work in government and a lot of things that don't work. My colleagues have heard me say this before when we were talking about the transportation bill, the fact that it is something that does work, where people who are using the transportation system are putting money into it. It comes from a trust account, and we make determinations as to how it should be allocated in accordance with the needs of the States, taking into consideration things such as highway deaths and things such as road miles and lane miles, and then make those allocations. Frankly, it works very well.

This is almost the same process, except these are water projects. Several people have talked about how it is overdue. Actually, this bill is 6 years overdue. We had the last one in the year 2000. We tried in 2001, 2002, 2003, and last year we came—we passed the bill on this floor, standing right here I can remember, and we thought it would be history by now, but the clock caught up with us and we didn't have time to get it out of conference and passed into law.

Now, I think if we look at this—I am going to make a statement a lot of people would not understand, but I am making this statement for my conservative friends. If you take away the authorization process from the way we do business down here, then it has to be done by appropriators. What we are talking about today doesn't spend a dime. You have heard people say it, and I felt the President, in his message, was a little misleading to imply that

this somehow is going to end up in more spending. It doesn't end up in more spending. It wouldn't matter what the amount of the bill is because what this does in this particular bill is it takes 751 projects, and it gives a maximum that can be spent on any project. If you go over the maximum, then you have what we call a 60-vote point of order which I will—I commit to standing up and invoking so we can't spend more money.

Now, it doesn't mean—if the total amount that you would add up in this bill is \$23 billion, it doesn't mean it is going to end up costing \$23 billion. That money has to be appropriated, and historically it has averaged out to about 70 percent of the projects. I have already said there are—what is the total number of projects in this bill—751 projects. Only 70 percent of those would get any funding, and then many of the rest of them will get funding at an amount far less than we are authorizing. We are saying you can go up to that amount.

Now, to understand this, I would like to kind of walk us through. It appears I will have time to do this because we don't have any more on our side who are planning to come down and speak. So the significant difference between authorizing and appropriating in the Senate is a long history, and it goes back to 1816. Let's start with the charts back there.

The responsibility of authorizing versus appropriating has been a debate that has been ongoing for a long time. What happened is, when they first created some 11 permanent standing committees, that happened in 1816 to handle legislative proposals.

At that time, they weren't really sure about authorizing and appropriating because the problem hadn't really come up yet—until 1867. In 1867, the Senate created the Appropriations Committee. It was the first step of the Senate to separate authorization and appropriations, saying that we should go through the process of authorizing before we appropriate.

In 1899, the Senate adopted a change to rule XVI to remove most of the appropriations bills from its jurisdiction because the Appropriations Committee was enacting policy on how Federal agencies internally operated. There is the difference right there. The first time that happened was in 1899. So the rule XVI, as we know it today, which gave birth at that time, said we should segregate the authorizing process from the appropriations process. Some Senators argued that the Appropriations Committee was legislating on appropriations bills, and the Senate directed that certain authorizing committees would handle appropriations legislation for the issues within their jurisdiction. And this diminished the role of the Appropriations Committee that had been established.

In 1922, the Senate changed course again and adopted another change to rule XVI. It is now rule XVI as we

know it today. Rule XVI says that if you appropriate money that is not authorized, it takes a supermajority 60 votes—instead of 51 votes. That may not sound like a big difference to a lot of people, but I assure it is a huge difference in passing legislation. So that restored the general appropriations back to the Appropriations Committee. However, they had the authorization committees to take care of the problems.

I will give you an example. The Armed Services Committee, on which I am honored to sit, is an authorization committee. I could use any number of examples. For example, I could talk about our F-22 vehicle coming up, and there are going to be people who don't really know that we need to have the F-22 because the F-15s and F-16s are inferior to some of the things Russia is making in their SU-30 and SU-35 vehicles. These are technical things that most of the Senators, if they are not sitting on the Armed Services Committee, would not know. Someone who didn't have the advantage of knowing why we should authorize different vehicles to defend America would have no way of doing it if they are just appropriators. So the example I use is a good one.

Right now, in the bill we are considering today, which is in conference—the Senate armed services reauthorization bill—with the House, it addresses the problem with a ballistic missile defense system. A lot of people aren't aware of it unless they sit on the committee, but there are three phases: the midcourse phase, the boost phase, and the terminal phase. There are two vehicles on the boost phase that are still in R&D. We don't have them yet. We are naked in order to try to knock down something in a boost phase. We have two ways of knocking down missiles in the midcourse phase, and we are working on two in the terminal phase.

I don't think there is anybody out there, after 9/11, who would not agree that we need to have this defense for America. That technology is there. If you are just an appropriator and not an authorizer, you would look at that and say: Wait a minute, we have six systems to knock down an incoming missile. So they may say we only need two; we can save X billions of dollars by only having two. But the problem is, as we all know, in the midcourse phase we don't know whether it is going to be within the range of a ground-based missile or where you can use an AEGIS missile fired off a ship. These are six technical systems that are necessary to defend America from an incoming missile. That comes from an authorization committee, not an appropriations committee. A lot of people, who don't have this information, are trying to knock down some of the money we are spending on missile defense. So I think that is probably the best example to use.

The same principle is true on my other committee, the Environment and

Public Works Committee. It applies to the bill today, the WRDA bill, the Water Resources Development Act bill. We review all projects and requests, and we make sure that every project of these 751 projects goes through a lot of scrutiny, and it has certain criteria that have to be met and an engineer's report from the Corps of Engineers.

I remember one time I cast a very unpopular vote—it was the right vote—several years ago when we had the Everglades Restoration Act, which passed 99 to 1. That one was me because it didn't meet the criteria. It didn't have the engineer's report and all that. A lot of people voted for it because they were afraid they could not explain their vote back home. I never had that problem.

We have all these projects that have gone through scrutiny, and when we finally pass the bill—which we have already passed and the President vetoed, and we are going to override the veto tomorrow—it will be reality tomorrow.

Here is what will happen after that. None of these projects we are talking about—sure, a lot of them are in Oklahoma, and a lot are in Colorado, and the Senator from Missouri talked about his, and the Senator from California will talk about things authorized in California. These have all met certain criteria. Very likely, when they come up—a lot of them—for appropriations, I will come down to the floor and oppose them. It doesn't mean I agree with everything we have authorized. We are just saying that thought has gone into it, they have looked at it professionally, it met the criteria, it has engineering reports, and we ought to authorize it and let the appropriators come in, and we can look at it closely to see if maybe we authorized too much or maybe we disagree with it. Right now, I can tell you that I was opposing appropriations to many things we authorized.

I can state it a different way. The only discipline we have in spending, I say to all these people who talk about earmarks, is the authorization process because if we take away the authorization process, we have no way of knowing, when the Appropriations Committee comes with a bill to the floor and says: We want to fund this, whether it meets the criteria.

So what we are doing with the bill we have passed and the veto that will be overridden tomorrow—so it will become law—is we are saying that we are putting in a maximum of 751 projects so that they cannot go over that amount. If they do—I make this commitment on the floor of the Senate tonight—I will be the first one down here to stand up and say I am going to invoke rule XVI to require a 60-vote point of order so that we will have discipline, and the appropriators are not going to spend more money than has been authorized.

That is a quick course. I don't expect that anybody will really understand it or believe it. I know in my heart that it is right and we have to have this

process. This fight that has been taking place between the appropriators and authorizers since 1816 is something that is necessary, and we have to protect authorization.

Let me bring up one more thing. If the President had never vetoed this bill—it doesn't make any difference because we are going to override the veto, and everybody has to know that. So this is kind of an exercise in futility. We have the bill; it is going to be reality. In the event that we are unable to override the veto tomorrow morning, that would mean we would not have an authorization bill. That means that any appropriator could come down here, or anybody else, and say we need to have this, and they could be swapping deals and meet no criteria whatsoever, and that is not the way we want to do it. So I see this as the only discipline we have for spending.

I have mentioned that I have the rating of being the most conservative Member in the Senate, and I do. But I also realize I am a big spender in some areas. One is national defense, and one is infrastructure. That is what we are supposed to do in this body. If you don't think there is a crisis out there in transportation—our roads, highways, and waterways—not very many people realize that in Oklahoma, we are actually navigable. We have a navigation way that comes all the way to my hometown of Tulsa, OK, the Port of Catoosa, where they can come up through Louisiana and up the Arkansas River, and right now we have a problem with that. We have a 12-foot channel, except for one small area that is 9 feet. That is a choke point. That limits what we can do.

If there is anything we need in this country—and all you have to do is drive on the highways and you see the cars and trucks going by and see how much worse the traffic is today than it was in the past. One of the great ways to relieve that traffic is to be able to utilize to a greater extent our navigation ways. I don't have the statistics with me, but you can carry three trainloads of stuff on a barge and move it actually cheaper, in many respects, into places. So in order to do the things the Senator from Missouri talked about in increasing the capacity to use these navigation ways, and even to my State of Oklahoma, it is something that is going to have a profound impact on the future of transportation in this country.

I don't think there is anybody who is so naive not to understand that we have a crisis in our transportation system. The traffic is worse every day, and I am sure each one of us—the 100 Senators who serve in this Chamber—gets hundreds of letters every day asking what are we going to do about the transportation system—not realizing that our action tonight will be a great relief to that problem.

I believe in building the infrastructure of this country, and I believe in the authorization process. I believe it

offers our only discipline on spending. I am sorry that a lot of conservatives don't understand this, and they believe this is a spending bill, when it is not. So as much as I hate to do this, I urge my colleagues on the Republican side to join me in overriding the President's veto of this very significant bill that each State in America needs.

Again, I know we are going to be seeing the chairman of the committee, Senator BOXER, soon. It is interesting that the committee called the Environment and Public Works Committee had the largest jurisdiction of any of the committees. Up until the last election and the new majority came in in January, I was chairman. Now Senator BOXER is chairman, and I am ranking member. We have worked together on this bill, and this is not something we have spent just a few hours or days on; we spent 6 years on it. We spent a lot of time looking at last year's bill to see what is relevant today.

Some of the detractors will say: Wait a minute, you have already authorized a lot of things that have not been appropriated. To that, I say you made my point. A lot of the things we are authorizing will not be appropriated. That fortifies the point that this should not be measured as a bill that is a \$23 billion bill or something that indicates we are going to spend all this money. This is a bill that is necessary in the process to offer discipline to our spending, and that is what we intend to do.

With that, I will retain the remainder of our time, in the event one of our Members wants more time.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today and tomorrow will be very special days for me here in the Senate because the Environment and Public Works Committee, led by myself and Senator INHOFE, comes forward united across party lines to lead the effort to override the President's veto of the Water Resources Development Act, a bill that will authorize the projects and policies of the Civil Works Program of the Army Corps of Engineers.

I wish to thank Senator INHOFE for his kind comments and say that I think everybody knows that when it comes to the environment, Senator INHOFE and I don't exactly see eye to eye. But when it comes to building the infrastructure of the United States of America, taking care of the needs of our communities, making sure there is flood control, that we can move goods because we need to dredge so many of our port areas, when it comes to making sure we have recreation areas, and,

yes, that we do the kind of environmental restoration that will help us with flood control—for example, restoring the great coastal wetlands of Louisiana—we can and do work together.

Yesterday, the House voted 361 to 54 to override the President's veto of this critical legislation, giving us in the Senate the opportunity to make this bill the law of the land by our vote tomorrow. I note it is very rare that we have successful veto overrides. Why is it? Because in their genius, our Founders said we need quite a supermajority to do that. So it is rare, indeed, when we have a strong vote such as this to go against a President of either party, and I have served with four from both political parties. The signal it sends to the executive branch, in a moment such as this, is we are asserting ourselves as representatives of the people. We are saying: Mr. President, we shouldn't have to have a fight about this. This is something we should work on together. When we did pass the conference report, I remember asking the President rhetorically: Do we have to fight about everything? I don't think we should. Senator INHOFE and I can set aside our differences to work on this bill. It seems to me we represent basically the entire philosophy from one end to the other, and it seems to me we should have had the support of the executive branch.

Today and tomorrow are also special days for the many people and communities across our Nation that have waited so long for this time to come, for this important legislation to become law. Indeed, when we finally accomplish this tomorrow—and I pray we do—it will be 7 years in the making, 7 years since we actually had a Water Resources Development Act. That is too long to wait.

I say to all the communities across our great country waiting for desperately needed flood control, such as New Orleans and the gulf coast, such as Sacramento in my State of California, where 300,000 people are in jeopardy should there be a flooding problem, I say to all of you: The wait is nearly over and help is on the way.

Again, I thank my ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator INHOFE. We do share a commitment to shoring up our Nation's infrastructure, including its water resources. On some issues, as we know, we do not stand shoulder to shoulder, but on this issue, we have stood shoulder to shoulder to get the work done, and I think we will stand shoulder to shoulder in the future, as well as look at other infrastructure needs in our States and communities.

I also thank the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee chairman and ranking member, Senators BAUCUS and ISAKSON. They have been a very important part of our team helping to put this package together.

Unfortunately, despite the bipartisan nature of this critical infrastructure investment and despite waiting 7 years,

the President decided 7 years was not long enough and he vetoed the bill. I tell you the truth, I still cannot believe it. I know many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle spoke with the President and said to the President: Please understand, Mr. President, this is not an appropriations bill, this is not a spending bill, this is an authorization bill. Anyone who wants to learn more about that simply read the record of what Senator INHOFE—if not the most fiscal conservative member, certainly one of the most in this body—said about this bill.

This bill is an authorization bill, and every single project has to go through the rigors of the appropriations process. But what we have to do is give the Corps the ability to complete repairs to levees, flood walls, and pumps that failed to protect the lives and property of those in New Orleans.

Remember when the President spoke in Jackson Square in September 2005 and he offered a pledge to the American people. This is what he said that night. I remember the eeriness of the scene, where the President had come out of the darkness because there was no electricity in New Orleans, and the lights were lighting him. It was, in a way, a touching moment.

What the President said was important. This is what he said:

Throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes, we will stay as long as it takes to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives.

I do believe when you say that, you need to mean it. We will do what it takes. Yet we had tonight Senator LANDRIEU and Senator VITTER, both representing New Orleans and Louisiana and representing their people with great emotion and great conviction, begging for this bill because this bill will help make Louisiana whole.

I traveled to New Orleans with several members of the committee to conduct a field hearing this year. Seven Senators were on that trip, a clear indication of how important protecting New Orleans and the gulf coast is to the Members of this Senate. We saw the needs of the New Orleans area, but we also saw the hope and the optimism of the people and the community leaders that the Federal Government would, in fact, keep its commitments.

This bill makes our promises real. This bill makes the promises of the President of the United States real. This misguided veto only created further delay, and I beg my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to listen to Senator INHOFE, to listen to Senator VITTER, to listen to Senator LANDRIEU, to listen to my words tonight.

WRDA also contains the authorization for Louisiana's Wetlands Restoration Program, wetlands that are critical to protecting south Louisiana from hurricanes and improving the environment.

Before I talk about the critical flood threat facing Sacramento in my State of California, I wish to talk a little bit

about Florida, and then I am going to yield 5 minutes to Senator NELSON.

Not only did I get to go to New Orleans, but I got an amazing invitation from Senator NELSON. Let's just say it was more than an invitation; it was a strong urging. It was a begging. It was so important to Senator NELSON that I certainly could not say no.

I went to see the Everglades with my own eyes. My husband came with me and Senator NELSON and his wife Grace greeted us there. We went out on a tour of the Everglades which we will never forget.

I can tell you the beauty of that place is most extraordinary. It is just extraordinary. As Senator NELSON will explain much better than I, we have an area that is in crisis. We have a window in which we must act to make sure the water flows into the Everglades to keep it alive, the river of grass.

One of the lasting memories of that trip as we went out and dusk fell and we were out and we saw the alligators out there, we saw what appeared to me—and, of course, Senator NELSON had seen this—I think he got more pleasure watching my face as I thought all of a sudden we were in a meadow. I almost thought: How could this boat actually be moving in a meadowland? It was not a meadowland. It was this river of grass.

We saw wildlife actually jumping out of this river of grass onto trees. It was a spectacular moment. I thought, God has given us this gift, and it is our obligation, it is our duty, it is our responsibility to make sure others get to see this gift.

At this time, I am happy to yield 7 minutes to Senator NELSON and I look forward to his remarks. I reserve my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, as the Senator from California has been describing her experience, I have been enjoying enormously not only her reflection of that experience but remembering seeing the faces of Senator BOXER and her husband as they saw these new experiences of gliding in an airboat over a sea of grass that Marjory Douglas called river of grass.

As we came to the edge and went into the big cypress preserve where cypress stands, clumps of large cypress trees dotted the landscape, as the Senator explained, it was getting close to sundown. As the light lowered, as you were gliding over this meadow of grass, it looked exactly like that until suddenly you were shocked into the reality that there was a doe and her fawn as they were bounding, not over the meadow but sloshing through the water as they headed toward the clump of cypress trees.

It is now our responsibility to protect and preserve this national treasure—indeed, an international treasure—for the generations to come. It was 60 years ago that the Everglades

National Park was created by an act of Congress and President Harry Truman signed the bill into law. The Senator at whose desk I now reside was then a young Member of Congress, Senator George Smathers, who helped bring that Everglades National Park 60 years ago, in December of 1947, into fruition.

Now we sit here on a momentous occasion. In order for us to continue to try to protect this national and natural treasure, we have to overcome a Presidential veto. It is important not just to our State but so many States because of these water projects, because the last time we had such a law that authorized these water projects was back in 2000.

What that plan did in 2000 in an Everglades restoration plan, created after years of study and analysis, was to try to restore the Everglades to something of what nature intended. But we couldn't do it like nature had it because a huge portion of the south part of the peninsula of Florida was the Everglades. Decades later, it is so different because there are 6 million people living in South Florida, there is a major agricultural industry, and in the intervening half century, mankind has come in and diked and drained the natural flow of the water in a way Mother Nature never intended. So what has passed—the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan in 2000—was intended, given the changes in the population, the agriculture, and the existing diking and draining, to restore as much of that to the natural function that Mother Nature intended so we could preserve the Everglades.

The bill we have in front of us contains two restoration projects that have undergone painstaking planning, design, and development, and they are ready for construction. But we can't get them constructed until we can get them authorized. The Indian River Lagoon and the Picayune Strand are vital projects—together worth \$2 billion—in increasing the water quality and maintaining and preserving the natural areas to reverse the decades of damage and neglect.

So 7 years after the creation of this plan, a plan that has been on hold because the Federal Government has faltered in its commitment to restoration of this national and natural treasure, it is time for us to get on and approve this bill, unfortunately, by overturning the President's veto.

The biggest threat now to the restoration of the Everglades—thanks to folks such as Senator BOXER and those beyond the boundaries of Florida who are finally understanding how important it is—is the delay. We made a promise 7 years ago, and we are going to finally fulfill that promise. It is a partnership between the State of Florida and the Federal Government. We committed ourselves then to the largest restoration project in the world, and when we pass this legislation, despite those who have tried to detour it, the Federal Government will have

made a significant step in living up to its commitment.

So with this victory close at hand, let me remind my colleagues there are many more battles we are going to have to fight in the future to save the Everglades. But, Madam President, it is my pleasure to stand here to support Senator BOXER in this vote to override the President's veto.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, how much time remains on my side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There remains 21 minutes 50 seconds.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, before Senator NELSON leaves the floor, I again thank him for bringing me into this entire plan. I am glad I could be of help in saving the Everglades, and I think he has support on both sides of the aisle.

There was an amazing story in the New York Times the other day about the Everglades and how we have to act. Madam President, you are one of the best environmentalists I know, and you know the window is closing for us on so many projects. We need to move now or it is too late. Once damage is irreparable, there is nothing more we can do. So I praise my friend, Senator NELSON.

I also say that his whole family is dedicated to this issue. When I went out there and saw the love his family has for this area, the understanding they have, and how the whole community has been brought together by Senator NELSON, I think this is a seminal moment for his career because what we are doing is so critical. And as he points out, we can't move forward unless we have this authorization.

The fact that we have to override a veto is sad. I mean, it is adding more time that we are losing. But I am hopeful that tomorrow, sometime perhaps even before noon, when the votes are taken, this bill will be the law of the land, and we can go back home and tell people we have, in fact, reached across party lines and done something for them, notwithstanding the President's objection.

So I thank Senator NELSON. And, Madam President, I am going to yield 7 minutes to Senator MURRAY, but before I do, I want to talk about one particular project that is in this bill for California.

We have many in here, but I think it is important that people understand when we looked at this bill, we looked at so many serious problems, where lives are at risk, and one place that is true is in the Sacramento region of California. As you know, that is our capital. This conference report, this important bill, allows the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation to complete the necessary modifications at the existing Folsom Dam in California so we can protect 300,000 residents of Sacramento and the capital itself from horrific flooding.

Madam President, imagine 300,000 people living in a very precarious situation. The capital itself is in a very

precarious situation, and we know we can make it safe. That veto left our citizens at risk. But, hopefully, tomorrow we will change that.

Sacramento is not only the capital of California, where we have 37 million people and growing, but it is also America's largest metropolitan area with less than 100-year flood control protection. So, again, it is America's largest metropolitan area with less than 100-year flood control protection. And for those who don't know what that means, we mean a flood that comes once in 100 years. That is what you have to plan for when you have so many people in harm's way.

Statistically, Sacramento is four times as likely to be devastated by flooding than New Orleans was. Sacramento is situated at the confluence of two great rivers, the American River and the Sacramento River. The Sacramento River is born in the Southern Cascade Mountain Range, while the American River originates in the High Sierra. The city sits in a low valley, in a low valley where these two rivers meet.

This large floodplain is one reason California has such productive farmland, and we all benefit from that. It is beautiful farmland. But as a result of growth, the Sacramento metropolitan area is now home to nearly half a million people and contains 165,000 homes, 1,300 government facilities, including the State capitol, and businesses providing 200,000 jobs. A major flood would cripple the Sacramento region's economy, significantly impair the operations of our government in our State, cause up to \$15 billion in direct damages, up to \$30 billion in total economic loss, and we can't even put a pricetag on the loss of life.

In our State, we know about flooding, we know about fires, and we know about earthquakes. I know, Madam President, in your State you have gone through many natural disasters as well.

In 1986, as a result of storms, 13 people were killed, 67 were injured, 1,300 homes were destroyed, and 967 businesses damaged—the total damage cost over \$400 million.

In 1997, 8 people were killed, 23,000 homes destroyed, and 2,000 businesses destroyed or damaged—the total damage was \$1.8 billion.

As the capital of the world's fifth largest economy, no one can deny it is important to protect the Sacramento region.

I would simply say, in this bill we are taking care of this problem, and I want to thank the House for their strong support, particularly DORIS MATSUI and the late, wonderful Congressman Bob Matsui, who really got us started on this project. We are going to do the right thing for Sacramento. It means everything to our State.

We also have many other important California projects in the bill—the revitalizing Los Angeles River, restoring the Salton Sea, critical flood control

projects, and dredging and navigation projects all throughout our communities. So this bill is really an economic lifeblood for California. It truly is. It is also a matter of life and death for our people.

So today is a moving and a touching day. We did in about 8 months, as we took the gavel, what hasn't been done in 7 years. It is a prideful moment but much more important than that; it shows we can reach across party lines. It shows we can work together across State lines. It shows we can work together between the House and the Senate. This moment is about to come, and it is going to mean a great deal to the people of our country.

Madam President, I yield 7 minutes to my dear friend from Washington State, Senator PATTY MURRAY, who has been such a leader on these issues and many others.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I thank the Senator from California for the tremendous work she has done on this critical bill that supports the infrastructure across the country and for her diligence in keeping to the task to make sure we are finally here at this point where we are just a vote away from having this signed into law.

Madam President, I wanted to come to the Senate floor tonight to urge the Senate to override the President's very shortsighted veto of this Water Resources Development Act. This is a bill that, as the Senator from California said, renews critical flood control, navigation, and water quality projects that are important across the country but are important in my home State of Washington as well.

This bill ensures our waterways can continue to be used to move goods. It helps restore our beaches and our wetlands, which are important to our coastal communities, and it makes sure we are protected from catastrophic floods. These projects in this bill are essential for our economy. And as we saw with Hurricane Katrina, they can also be a matter of life and death. That is why I was astonished that President Bush vetoed this bill.

More than 2 years after Katrina flooded 80 percent of New Orleans, destroyed coastal Mississippi, and killed 1,600 people, I couldn't believe the President said no to this bill. Even after he failed to respond to the devastation on the gulf, he is now standing in the way of projects that will protect the people of that region. Madam President, 81 Senators approved this bill in October because we understood our responsibility to invest in these important projects that provide for public safety and that keep our economy healthy.

The President's veto is another example of his misplaced priorities. Throughout this year he has been insistent on playing political games at the expense of our Nation's economy and our health and safety. So, again, I

urge our colleagues to override this veto and show the President he got it wrong.

I know most of the Senate agree it is critical for us to address these issues now. This bill will help us avoid another catastrophe such as we saw in New Orleans, and it will help ensure our environment and our economy stays healthy.

Too many years have passed since the Water Development Resources Act was reauthorized. It is 5 years overdue now, and the needs are piling up. I again thank Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE because their leadership in the first year of this Democratic-controlled Congress made sure that this bill did finally get to the President.

The tragedy in New Orleans provided a dramatic example of how necessary this bill is, but there are hundreds of communities across the country that have been waiting for years for Congress to act on this bill and ensure that these vital projects finally get started.

WRDA creates a national levee safety program and ensures thousands of miles of levees across the country will get a general safety inspection. It enables the Federal Government to act quickly on critical flood control projects, and it helps our local communities prepare for damaging and deadly floods.

This bill is also about economic development. It ensures that shipping can continue on our waterways and helps us to move everything from wheat to cars to wind turbines from port to port. And it is about making sure our lakes and our beaches are clean and safe. It protects our environment and promotes recreation and it provides jobs.

By vetoing this bill, the President said no to the communities that have been waiting for years to go ahead with these critical environmental, safety, and economic development projects. And, Madam President, some of those communities are in our home State. From shipping, to boating, to fishing, our waterways in the Pacific Northwest are vital to our way of life. That includes, by the way, a major shipping route on the Columbia River, with container ships and bulk carriers and tankers and car carriers that travel back and forth, as the Presiding Officer knows, carrying goods in, and shipping lumber and grain and countless other products out.

So it is vital to the economy of our region the Columbia get regular dredging and maintenance. This bill, the WRDA bill, lifts restrictions on the number of days Federal dredges can operate to make sure that happens. And it helps our region in a number of other ways too. This bill gives the Corps of Engineers another tool so they can eliminate that huge backlog of permit applications for people who are trying to do everything from building piers to expanding ports. That will save our local governments millions of dollars.

By vetoing this bill, the WRDA bill, the President essentially said no to the

economy, to the safety, and to the environment in my home State of Washington.

Sadly, the Water Resources Development Act is not the first important and bipartisan bill this President has blocked. It happens to be the fifth. Besides this bill, President Bush has vetoed children's health insurance; life-saving stem cell research, twice; and our efforts to change course in Iraq and bring our troops home. He has, by the way, threatened to veto many of our appropriations bills. He says he objects to our spending bills because they invest \$22 billion more than he asked for.

President Bush is pretty happy to talk about pork and complain, but what he will not do and has not done yet is tell the American people what he wants to cut. Would he cut health care funding? Would he cut the money to build our deteriorating bridges and roads? Maybe he would cut investments to the FBI or the DEA. Perhaps it is the millions of dollars of funding we have in these bills for job training or education that he objects to. We don't know because he would not say.

But he ought to know this. We stand by these important investments because our bills ensure our roads and our bridges and our airports and our railways are in good and safe condition. They ensure our kids can see a doctor. They ensure we can do cutting-edge research so we can find cures for diseases such as diabetes or MS. But as we have seen, the President has insisted on blocking these ideas and priorities and keeps repeating his apparent favorite four-letter word, which is "veto."

Instead of investing in our communities, he has continued to play political games. Instead of progress, all we have gotten are vetoes. I hope it is time for us to send a message to President Bush: We are not going to stand idly by and watch you veto these investments in our communities. I hope our colleagues override this veto on this important legislation, and I believe by standing together, as our friends in the House did, we can send a strong message to him about who has the right priorities for America. I hope by doing this we can finally unite with our Republican colleagues in choosing a new course for the other important bills—the children's health bill, all of our appropriations bills, even the stem cell research bill.

I think it is time for Congress to turn a page on the President's obstruction. This is the first step. I hope there are more to come. As I have said before, and I will say it again now, people around this country are eager for a change. They want to see a light at the end of the tunnel, and we want to make sure the President does not put out that light.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, how much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 7 minutes 17 seconds.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Washington. I think what she did in her presentation is give a message of hope. I think this is a signal, this vote tomorrow. It is a signal we can work together across party lines to get things done for the good of the American people. People want to see that and they are going to see it.

The President said this bill lacked fiscal discipline. He doesn't realize, I guess, it has been 7 years in the making. We used to do these WRDA bills, these water resources bills, every 2 years. So there has been pent-up demand, the normal pent-up demand in a country that is growing, whose economy is growing, that is importing more and exporting more goods. Of course we are going to have a pent-up demand.

Then, when you put on top of that the disastrous consequences from Katrina and Rita and the fact that we are getting more floods and we are having more problems, you realize this bill is a very fair and defensible one. Again, as Senator INHOFE said, we don't spend a dime. This is an authorization bill, the first step in bringing Federal resources and expertise to a project that is developed at the local level.

Every one of these projects is brought to us from our communities. That means the communities are willing to put up funds and our funding is so important because it spurs on these projects.

I think what is sort of getting to the American people is the fact that, as the President says, a bill such as this, which is an authorizing bill, is too large. He seems to have a blank check for ventures overseas—\$12 billion a month is going out the door, \$12 billion a month for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This bill equals literally 2 months of that funding. It has taken us 7 years.

Put it into perspective. This bill that authorizes all these important flood control projects, navigation projects, recreation projects, environmental restoration projects—all these bills add up to 2 months in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Then we read on the front page of the Washington Post the other day that the administration is paying millions of dollars to fix a dam in Iraq. I am all for that. I don't want to see anyone hurt in Iraq. But I don't want to see anyone hurt in Sacramento or in Seattle or in New Orleans or in any of the towns in Mississippi. I don't want to see us lose the Everglades. The fact of the matter is, I think the President is on weak ground in vetoing this bill that is so important for the public works of the country while spending so much on the public works of countries abroad.

This is an investment in America we will be making tomorrow morning, if all is well, and we see that same kind of vote we had the last time. We can stand tall and proud. Seven years is too long a wait for a bill that authorizes essential programs, such as navigation,

flood control, ecosystem restoration—but we are ready to go. I think this bill meets our communities' needs. Some of them are unmet needs. Some of them are acute needs.

Make no mistake, the projects that are authorized in this bill that I hope we will again pass tomorrow—again I hope we will override the President's veto—are going to protect thousands of homes and the lives of millions from catastrophic flooding. It is going to help us restore wetlands, estuaries, and rivers of our Nation—places where wildlife thrives and our families go to enjoy the outdoors.

Indeed, as hunting, fishing, boating, camping, and other outdoor industries boom, this bill is an important part of keeping our recreation economy thriving.

It also says, yes, our ports need attention. The waterways need to have capacity. We need to make shipping easier, safer, and efficient, so it keeps the economy moving. So much of our economy is dependent on water resources. Our ports and harbors are the gateway to the world. Our manufactured goods, such as autos and computer chips, move through those ports. Our agricultural goods, such as grains, wines, and fruit, pass through our ports and harbors to be sold around the world. Goods come in and they get distributed to the entire country. We are talking about thousands of jobs. We are talking about moving goods. We are talking about recreation.

We are talking about 360 million visits a year to our lakes and our beaches and other areas; 25 million people visit a Corps project at least once a year and that generates 600,000 jobs.

Let me say, tomorrow or later tonight my colleagues may hear some complaint about the fact that we didn't do enough Corps reform. I wish to say Members on both sides of the aisle spent a great deal of time on this issue. Senator FEINGOLD has been a prime mover in this area, and I greatly respect the work he has done, but I have to say, as I have said to him, I know he wants more. But we went a long way. This is a good package. We have a truly independent review process. I think we actually made that independent review process more independent. We have outside experts, free of political pressure, coming in and examining all aspects of the environmental, economic, and engineering components of a project study. These panels will be able to receive and evaluate public comments. The panels will be available to advise the Corps throughout the entire development process.

The bill requires the first updates of the Corps planning principles and guidelines since 1983, when President Reagan was in the White House. The bill will make the Corps mitigate the impact of its projects the same as any other party and make sure mitigation is done in kind, up front, and not as an afterthought.

We included safety assurance reviews, increased watershed planning,

authorized a levee safety assessment program, and expedited the deauthorization of the backlog of unconstructed projects.

But Senator FEINGOLD still believes we should have done more. Frankly, I would love to do more, and I will work on this in the future. But we went as far as we could go. We cannot make the perfect the enemy of the good. I find myself saying that over and over around here. We have to do good work. The only perfect work is the work each of us wants to do.

I know what is perfect. Senator CANTWELL knows what is perfect. Senator INHOFE knows what is perfect. If we write our own bill, to us it is perfect. But we have 100 of us, 100 different "perfects." It means we have to reach across the aisle and work together.

I say to Senator FEINGOLD, even though he is not on the floor today, thank you for your leadership, but please reconsider your opposition. Vote with us on the override. We have gone a long way. We have acted in good faith, and we will continue to work with you in the future on so many of the important reform issues you bring to this floor.

Tomorrow is a very big day for me as chairman of the committee, for Senator INHOFE, who actually started this bill when he had the gavel. He brought it pretty close to being the law, but we didn't quite get it over the line. He has worked with me as a solid team member.

I think it is going to be a great day for the Congress. I think it is going to be a great day for the Constitution. What we are saying: Mr. President, we are elected too. We count too. The American people vote for us too. When so many of us tell you we believe strongly that we need to meet the infrastructure needs of our country, we hope you would come to the table. This time you chose not to do so. We hope in the future you will join us.

It is a great day for the Constitution. The Framers of the Constitution foresaw this. They said: If you have an executive who decides to veto something that is a crying need in the Nation, and everybody agrees—67 of us, or two-thirds of those present and voting, can override a veto. Tomorrow is going to be a great day for the health and safety of the people of my State of California, of the United States.

I look forward to coming to the floor tomorrow. I think Senator INHOFE and I will divide 15 minutes, and we will, once more, lay out in shorter form why we think it is essential to override this ill-advised veto.

Madam President, thank you so much for your consideration, and for your work on this bill.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Madam President, I rise in support of the Water Resources Development Act conference report.

It has been 6 years since Congress last passed a water resources and development reauthorization bill. The time has come to finally pass this im-

portant legislation. I am very disappointed that the President has vetoed this bill.

America's infrastructure and waterways system is the foundation of our economy. For too long, we have been ignoring our infrastructure, but Katrina was a wake-up call for all of us. In the wake of this disaster, we saw firsthand the devastating impact of a weak infrastructure on our people and our economy. The more we continue to fail to fund our water infrastructure, the more we are putting our Nation's competitiveness at risk in this global marketplace.

Our physical infrastructure is a critical piece to making America more competitive. Our infinite needs are overwhelming and being squeezed. We should be rebuilding an infrastructure of competitiveness so that future generations have at least the same opportunity to enjoy our standard of living and quality of life. If we continue to ignore the upkeep—the deterioration of our locks and dams, flood control projects, and navigation channels—we risk disruptions in waterborne commerce, decreased protection against floods as we saw in Katrina and other environmental damage.

Additionally, I am pleased that this bill includes many provisions that will benefit the Great Lakes. First, there is authority for the Corps to deal with a very serious threat facing the Great Lakes. Asian carp are just miles from the lakes, and the only thing standing in their way is a temporary dispersal barrier in the Chicago Ship & Sanitary Canal. This bill authorizes the Corps to complete construction of Barrier II which is the permanent barrier as well as to convert Barrier I into a permanent facility and to operate and maintain both dispersal barriers at full Federal cost. Under this authority, the Corps would study options for hydrologic separation of the canal and the Great Lakes while maintaining the movement of cargo and recreational vessels.

This bill clarifies that any reconnaissance study under the Great Lakes Fishery & Ecosystem Restoration program is to be performed at full federal expense. The Great Lakes navigation system has been associated with impacts on Great Lakes fishery resources, and the purpose of the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration program is for the Corps to cooperate with others to plan, implement, and evaluate projects supporting the restoration of the fishery, ecosystem, and beneficial uses of the Great Lakes. When Congress authorized this program initially, the intention was for the Corps to develop projects under this authority just like other programs. That means that the reconnaissance study is to be a fully federal expense, and cost-sharing is required for subsequent study, engineering, design, and construction.

This bill reauthorizes the Great Lakes Remedial Action Plans and Sediment Remediation and the Great Lakes

Tributary Models Program. These are two programs that allow the Corps to provide assistance for controlling the source of sediments and to identifying specific actions to resolve pollution problems.

Also contained in this bill is authority directing the Corps to expedite the operation and maintenance, including dredging, of the navigation features of the Great Lakes and connecting channels for the purpose of supporting navigation. The Corps has a huge backlog of work, and that backlog includes the Great Lakes. Freighters are getting stuck in shipping channels, other ships are carrying reduced loads, and some shipments have simply ceased altogether. The Corps estimates a backlog of 16 million cubic yards of dredging at commercial Great Lakes harbors and channels, which the Army Corps expects will cost about \$192 million to address. In order to help address this backlog, the Corps will be authorized to expedite this work.

Lastly, this bill allows the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation to carry out much-needed repairs, including maintenance dredging, of the Eisenhower and Snell lock facilities and related navigational infrastructure for the St. Lawrence Seaway. Unfortunately, like many of our infrastructure projects, we have not done much upkeep of the St. Lawrence Seaway. This bill will allow for those improvements to be made at a total cost of \$134,650,000.

The passage of this WRDA conference report cannot be delayed any further. It is simply too important to our Nation in terms of its benefits to our economy and environment and for the speedy recovery for the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to override the President's veto.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, I will vote to sustain President Bush's veto of the Water Resources Development Act. The President's veto of the WRDA bill is a welcome opportunity for Congress to modify the flawed, bloated bill. Instead of overriding the veto, Congress should be taking this opportunity to fix the bill.

For 7 years, I have worked with Senator MCCAIN and many of our colleagues to achieve essential reforms of the Corps of Engineers, and have long anticipated the day that meaningful reforms are enacted. Unfortunately, during conference, the Senate's strong Corps reform provisions were significantly watered down. Instead of the reform bill that the country needs, this bill is simply the latest example of business as usual.

After a decade of Government and independent reports calling for reforming the Corps, and pointing out stunning flaws in Corps projects and project studies, and after the tragic failures of New Orleans' levees during Hurricane Katrina, the American people deserve meaningful reforms to ensure that the projects the Corps builds are safe, ap-

propriate, environmentally responsible and fiscally sound. The urgency and necessity could not be clearer.

A critical component of reforming the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is ensuring independent review of significant Corps projects. This bill provides review but does not ensure it is truly independent.

I will continue to push for Corps reforms that ensure fiscal responsibility, accountability, public safety, and environmental protections. This means ensuring that Americans' tax dollars are spent on the most important priorities, not just on Members' pet projects. Earlier this year, I was joined by Senators MCCAIN, COBURN, CARPER, GREGG, SUNUNU, and DEMINT in offering an amendment to form a commission of non-Federal, water resources experts to provide Congress recommendations on a process for prioritizing Corps projects.

However, the Senate defeated this effort. I can only conclude that many of our colleagues think the status quo is acceptable. To me, there is nothing acceptable about a \$58 billion backlog (soon to be \$81 billion) of authorized but unfunded projects. Some of my colleagues have argued it is okay to authorize \$23 billion in projects, because WRDA only authorizes projects and does not appropriate funds. This approach shirks our responsibility as elected officials. By authorizing WRDA projects, Congress is indicating these projects are worthy of funding and that taxpayer dollars should be committed to these projects. Unfortunately, without some way of prioritizing and with a limited annual construction budget of around \$2 billion, our Nation's critical infrastructure and restoration projects—and the American people who depend on these water resources projects—will suffer.

The President did the right thing when he vetoed the WRDA bill and I am disappointed that Congress is determined to override that veto. My colleagues would be better off if they listened to people like Mark Beorkrem, a true Corps reform champion. Mark recently passed away, but his 20 years of advocacy on behalf of the Mississippi River and reforming the Corps of Engineers will have profound and lasting effects on the health and vitality of the Mississippi and rivers across the country. Most recently, Mark played a pivotal role in ensuring the inclusion of a comprehensive ecosystem restoration component in the Corps' Mississippi River lock expansion project. He also provided leadership within the national Corps Reform Network, as well as the Sierra Club, sharing his knowledge and passion for environmental protection and restoration. The Mississippi and many of our Nation's rivers and wetlands are better off thanks to Mark's tireless efforts. We should be guided by his example.

I urge my colleagues to support the President's veto of the WRDA conference report, and I ask unanimous

consent to have printed in the RECORD newspaper editorials on this bill.

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

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 5, 2007]
FISCAL PLUNGE, A VETOED \$23 BILLION WATER BILL IS NOT WORTH SAVING

Ah, the theatrics of Washington. On Friday, President Bush vetoed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), a bill that would authorize \$23 billion in spending on water projects by the Army Corps of Engineers. Lawmakers of both parties were critical. Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) said that the veto shows "President Bush is out of touch with the American people and their priorities." According to Mr. Reid, one of 81 senators to vote for the WRDA (it passed the House 381 to 40), the bill would "strengthen our environment and economy and protect our natural resources" and fund projects "essential to protecting the people of the Gulf Coast region" from hurricanes. The veto is "irresponsible," Mr. Reid declared.

After almost five years in which he did little to check the spending of a Republican-controlled Congress, Mr. Bush is a bit late in trying to recover his party's reputation for fiscal conservatism. But even discounting for the White House's political posturing, this is hardly an example of an "irresponsible" veto. To the contrary, that word might better be applied to the WRDA itself. The bill would indeed authorize about \$1.9 billion for coastal ecosystem restoration and protection in Louisiana to help the state rebuild its defenses against hurricanes. The president supports that; he just thinks that Congress could have authorized it without also larding on billions of dollars worth of economically and environmentally questionable projects. And he's right: After all, the Senate and the House versions of the legislation tipped the scales at \$14 billion and \$15 billion, respectively. Then, in conference committee, lawmakers added more pet projects to bring the total up to \$23 billion.

The silver lining in the bill is that it takes some tentative steps toward reforming the Army Corps, providing for independent review of projects worth more than \$45 million. But this modest change is much weaker than what the overhaul reformers in the Senate had advocated. Thus Mr. Bush's valid concern, expressed in his veto message, that the WRDA "does not set priorities" among the \$58 billion in projects authorized in past bills. Indeed, though it has a high nominal price tag, the WRDA only promises projects, essential and otherwise, that have to compete for the \$2 billion the Army Corps spends each year. So the WRDA is largely a hollow political exercise. Given the overwhelming margins by which both houses passed the bill, though, Mr. Bush's veto is almost certain to be promptly overridden. This time, Congress's empty gesture will trump the president's futile one.

[From the Washington Times, Nov. 6, 2007]
SCANT RESOURCES

This week's anticipated veto override by Congress on a water-projects spending bill will allow \$23 billion in unfunded mandates, codifying a pork-laden plan that, for the most part, will not come to fruition. Ironically, these members of Congress who have given overwhelming approval of the bill and are poised to overthrow President Bush's veto are highly unlikely to actually set aside real funding for the bill when it comes time to parcel out appropriations.

Congress gave landslide approval for this bill (81-12 in the Senate and 381-40 in the

House) to grant the \$23 billion for some 900 projects by the Army Corps of Engineers and yet they failed to back up the mandates with actual funding. This makes the political theater all the more an empty charade, with Mr. Bush finally chastising Congress for its lack of fiscal restraint and members of his own party lampooning his efforts.

The Water Resources Development Act adds to the backlog of mandates the corps will ostensibly be handling—\$38 billion by Mr. Bush's count and \$58 billion by Taxpayers for Common Sense. It is puzzling that Congress would continue to add to this burden when historically Congress allocates a mere \$2 billion per year for new corps construction projects. It seems most members relish the opportunity to send out a crowing press release in their home district about a hard-fought earmark that has fat chance of ever improving the quality of life for their constituents.

The bill lacks the prioritization needed to ensure vital projects are completed first. However, this is not new—pork projects continue to dilute the corps' spending power as it spreads itself too thin. This was apparent in Louisiana, a state that by far has enjoyed the most in corps appropriations (some \$1.9 billion in the last five years to second-place California's \$1.4 billion). Yet, rather than placing high priority on projects like the levees prior to Hurricane Katrina, funding instead went to an unjustifiable navigation canal lock project and the low-trafficked J. Bennett Johnston Waterway.

An odd set of bedfellows have urged oversight and belt-tightening on the water projects, from Sen. Russ Feingold, Wisconsin Democrat, to the earmark watchdog Republicans Sen. Jim DeMint of South Carolina and Rep. Jeff Flake of Arizona. While their logical stance will be dismissed, the consolation is most of the projects in this earmark-laden bill won't see the light of day.

[From USA Today, Nov. 7, 2006]

OUR VIEW ON FLOOD CONTROL: DESPITE KATRINA, BUSINESS AS USUAL ON WATER PROJECTS. INSTEAD OF SETTING PRIORITIES, CONGRESS PILES ON THE PORK.

Suppose you need a new car. You want to spend \$14,000. Your spouse argues for \$15,000. Then you go to the showroom and you compromise—by driving away in a \$23,000 vehicle.

Add six more zeroes to each figure, and that's basically what happened in Congress to the first legislation since 2000 to authorize new water projects. The Senate approved \$14 billion, the House approved \$15 billion and they "compromised" on \$23 billion.

This bloated package—everything from dams and levees to sewage treatment plants and beach restoration—is, of course, an exercise in local greed and political clout. Neither is going away any time soon. But in its ham-fisted grab for the money, Congress also managed to ignore lessons taught so painfully by Hurricane Katrina.

It may complete the folly this week if the Senate, as expected, follows Tuesday's House action and overrides a richly deserved veto by President Bush.

For decades, lawmakers have authorized water projects less on the nation's needs than on their own need to bring home federal dollars and get re-elected.

In the process, the Gulf Coast was made steadily more vulnerable. Projects to tame the Mississippi's flow and turn it into a lucrative shipping channel degraded marshes and swamps that had long protected New Orleans from storm surges. Katrina blew past the vanishing buffers, pushed water up a man-made channel and overwhelmed ineptly built federal levees.

While the \$23 billion measure authorizes projects designed to mitigate such blunders—strengthening New Orleans' levees, for instance, and starting to restore the Louisiana coastal wetlands and Florida's Everglades—it also includes an assortment of dubious ones, on the Gulf Coast and elsewhere: \$131 million to deepen Louisiana's Port of Iberia, even though the project failed a government cost-benefit analysis. After that, Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., made sure the calculation was redone.

\$2 billion to expand Upper Mississippi River navigation locks to accommodate more barges. In 2001, the project was halted when government planners were accused of overestimating barge traffic and using other inaccurate assumptions to justify the locks. Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., vowed to get the project built anyway.

\$56 million to replenish sand at Imperial Beach in San Diego County. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., defends it as a way to fight "storm surge." That's dubious, and in any case, why should taxpayers in Kansas have to re-sand a beach in California?

Millions more for local water supply projects and other unspecified plans.

Absent is any plan to reform this cavalier process. The Senate rejected, 69-22, a measure to create a commission of outside experts to set priorities.

Unfortunately, Bush's record on fiscal responsibility is so poor that his veto carries little credibility on Capitol Hill. So, after sustaining vetoes it should have overridden (on stem-cell research and children's health insurance), Congress is now about to override a veto it should have sustained.

Lawmakers could have used this as an opportunity to write a cheaper, cleaner, more sensible roadmap for making the nation safer from hurricanes and floods. Instead, they are spending tax dollars on a vehicle loaded with expensive, unnecessary options.

[From the New York Times, July 15, 2007]

REFORM FOR THE CORPS

Congress appears to be on track to approve a major water resources bill that would, among other provisions, provide long-overdue money for Everglades restoration and money to begin rebuilding Louisiana's vulnerable wetlands. But the House and Senate versions of the bill diverge on one crucial issue: reforming the Army Corps of Engineers.

This difference should be resolved by Senate and House negotiators in favor of the stronger Senate version, which guarantees meaningful reform.

Compared with most government agencies, the corps has always lived a charmed and largely undisciplined life, accountable to no one except a Congress that is happy to let it do whatever it wants as long as it builds the dams, levees, bridges and other pork-barrel projects dear to Congressional hearts.

One result is that over the years the corps has inflated the economic payoffs of its projects while underestimating their potential damage to the environment. As the levee failures during Hurricane Katrina demonstrated, the corps has also made misjudgments in engineering and design.

The Senate version addresses this by requiring independent peer review of the design, cost and environmental consequences of projects exceeding \$40 million in value. The House version offers a review process that is more loosely structured and is independent in name only. It gives the corps all sorts of wiggle room, including the authority to define the scope of the reviews, which in turn could leave important issues unexamined.

There are other differences between the two versions, but this is the most important. The Senate should stand firm.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

WRDA VETO OVERRIDE

Mr. DURBIN. I rise today supporting the override of the President's veto of the Water Resources Development Act, known as the WRDA bill. We have waited for this bill for a long time. Senator BOXER of California and Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma worked so hard on it; 7 years it took us to put this bill together. It is a bill which should be passed on a regular basis because the needs of our country are recurring. They did a great job in putting this bill together. The conference passed it with an overwhelming vote within 7 months after the session began.

After 7 years of toil and 7 months hard work to put the bill together, it authorizes navigation, ecosystem restoration, and flood and storm damage reduction projects all over America. The projects in this bill are important for all of our Nation and represent benefits to rural and urban areas as well.

In Chicago, for example, residents will see enormous benefits from the Thornton and McCook Reservoirs projects in this bill. These reservoirs are currently under construction, but until they are completed, significant areas in that part of the country will remain unprotected from major floods. I know what I am speaking of. It has not been that long ago—only a few weeks—that I was in the suburbs watching them as they packed the sandbags and turned the pumps on in the basements and found ways to avoid the floodwater damage that was afflicting most of our area in the northern suburbs, in the northwest suburbs.

These reservoirs, when completed, will provide some protection. Without them, millions of homeowners are going to be exposed to flooding. There is another element. It is not just the damage to the communities, it is not just the interruption of commerce, it is not the water-soaked basement and all of the stuff that has to be thrown away, it is not just the expense of buying a pump to try to clear out our home; it is also the fact that when we run into this flooding situation we have sewer backups that discharge raw sewage into Lake Michigan. That is unacceptable. It is the sort of thing every community along the lake has to take seriously.

How does a community come up with the resources to deal with that so the storm drains do not overflow? Well, it

is hard for them to come up with the resources by themselves. But with Federal assistance it is possible.

Critics of this kind of approach say it is porkbarrel, more earmarks and Federal spending and, you know, these Senators, they are trying to put more money in their States for political reasons. Well, the fact is, this is Federal money earmarked for projects to avoid flooding, to protect homes, to protect neighborhoods, and to protect great national treasures such as Lake Michigan.

The reservoirs not only will help stop sewage overflows, but they are going to save homeowners money. Almost 75 percent of the residential lots in South Holland, IL, are now in a floodplain. That will be removed when the Thornton projects are complete. Completing these projects will save the homeowners in South Holland \$713,000 in annual insurance premiums.

A lot of those homeowners are struggling with property taxes now and getting a break on flood insurance is certainly good news. This is just one of the many examples of how the WRDA bill will save homeowners real dollars and protect their homes.

Another important feature of the bill for Illinois is increased lock capacity and improvements to the ecosystem of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The Mississippi River, of course, is a beautiful river, and father of all waters, and has many claims to historic and natural significance. But it also is an important avenue of commerce. This is the backbone of the waterway system of America. It transports \$12 billion worth of products each year, including over 1 billion bushels of grain to ports around the world. This efficient river transportation is vital to Illinois. Shipping by barge is inexpensive and helps keep our ports competitive. That is good for producers and good for consumers all over the world.

More than half of the Illinois annual corn crop and 75 percent of all U.S. soybean exports travel along the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Shipping by barge is not only cost effective, but it has real environmental benefits. Barges operate at 10 percent of the cost of trucks, 40 percent of the cost of trains, they release far less carbon monoxide, nitrous oxide, and hydrocarbons, and barges use much less fuel to operate.

But the system of locks and dams along the Upper Mississippi that make travel possible is in desperate need of modernization. The current system was built 70 years ago and it needs to be repaired. Many of the older locks are only 600 feet in length. Most of the current barges are twice that length. That means these goods take twice as long to go down the river into the marketplace.

The override veto before us today will authorize \$2.2 billion for replacing and upgrading locks and dams, and—this is a critical part of it—\$1.7 billion for ecosystem restoration along the river.

We struck an agreement between those who want to use the river for commerce, and those who value it as a natural resource. We said, if we improve the locks and dams, we will put a comparable amount of money, \$1.7 billion, into restoring the river, the ecosystem of the Mississippi River. So I think that is a fairminded, balanced approach to what our Nation needs.

As we have seen in the tragedy that occurred along Minnesota's 35-W bridge, our country's infrastructure is aging and overburdened. The projects included in this bill are desperately needed to shore up our waterway system, a vital component of our national infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the President vetoed this bill last Friday. After years of trying to put this bill together, this President discovered his veto pen this year and decided he would start vetoing bills one after the other. This is the latest casualty. The WRDA veto override was passed by the House yesterday with an overwhelming vote, 361 to 54.

When the Senate originally considered the bill earlier this year, there were only five Senators who voted against it. In less than 1 week this Congress has come together to send the President a strong message that his fiscal priorities are misplaced and misguided. I do not understand how this President can ask us for \$196 billion to rebuild Iraq, and we ask for \$23 billion to put into rebuilding America's waterways, protecting the levees that could flood communities and doing things that are critical for our future, and the President says it is wasteful spending—wasteful if it is spent in America, not wasteful if it is spent in Iraq?

I fear the President gets up every morning in the White House and looks out the window and all he sees is Iraq. If he looked out that window, he would see America is out here too. It needs investment. A strong America begins at home. The Water Resources Development Act will build the infrastructure which will build the economy, creating good business, good-paying jobs, construction jobs that cannot be outsourced, jobs that will be filled by Americans getting decent wages and good benefits, taking them home to their families, building up the neighborhoods and communities that are the backbone of this great Nation.

The President does not see that. Oh, he can see \$196 billion for Iraq. He cannot see \$23 billion for America. I think he is wrong. By the vote yesterday in the House of Representatives, overwhelmingly they told him he was wrong. I hope we reach the same conclusion when this matter comes before us tomorrow. What was intended to be reauthorized every 2 years is now 5 years too late.

If we follow the President's lead, we will postpone this again, we will see locks and dams continue to deteriorate, bridges continue to fail, and people wondering why in the world this great Nation of America is not making

certain its infrastructure and backbone are strong enough to sustain economic growth.

It is time the President stopped using his veto pen for essential projects, programs like those in this bill, and in the appropriations bills that will be sent his way. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill to override the President's veto.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

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

EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, this great Nation has long stood for a commitment to justice and equal rights for all Americans. Opening the doors of opportunity to all who have something to contribute has been a key to America's success as the world's strongest economy, and as the world's most successful democracy. Our cultural diversity is a pillar of our strength, and the promise of equal rights is a fundamental freedom of our democracy. Today, the House passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007, which would further promote and protect our country's diversity and every American's civil rights by further protecting Americans from discrimination in the workplace.

This important legislation would prohibit workplace discrimination by making it illegal to fire, refuse to hire, or refuse to promote employees simply based on a person's sexual orientation. Currently, Federal law provides basic legal protection against employment discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin or disability but not sexual orientation. Discrimination on the basis of certain personal characteristics has no place in any workplace or in any State, and it is long overdue for Congress to extend American employees these protections. This legislation has broad support not only from civil rights groups but also from leading American corporations, because they understand that there is no place for discrimination in our workplaces.

I commend the House for passing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007, and I look forward to the Senate taking up this measure without delay.