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H. CON. RES. 86

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding Federal decisions, actions, and regulations affecting water.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 15, 1999

Mr. BLUMENAUER submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding Federal decisions, actions, and regulations affecting water.

Whereas watersheds and water issues transcend local, State, tribal, and national boundaries;

Whereas the Federal Government has long been involved in the development of water policy through its management of water resources, its construction of water and navigation projects, and its implementation of Federal regulatory statutes;

Whereas Federal decisions and actions affecting water have focused on addressing a series of engineering challenges rather than implementing a long-term, comprehensive plan developed with adequate coordination among Federal departments and agencies;

Whereas despite devoting years of effort and spending billions of dollars to meet the challenges posed by water issues, the Federal Government cannot guarantee the people of the Nation clean drinking water, reliable flood protection, or lakes and rivers that can support recreation or wild-life;

Whereas despite the fact that public and private entities spent \$260,000,000,000 between 1970 and 1984 to construct and operate wastewater treatment facilities, it is becoming increasingly difficult to supply the needs of the Nation for safe, clean water;

Whereas despite the fact that the Federal Government spent more than \$38,000,000,000 between 1960 and 1985 to control flooding, flood losses in the United States now average approximately \$8,000,000,000 each year;

Whereas, when adjusted for inflation, current annual losses due to flooding in the United States are 4 times greater than such losses experienced in the early 1950's;

Whereas fish habitat in more than 50 percent of the Nation's streams suffer from such adverse water conditions as turbidity, high temperature, high concentrations of toxins, and low levels of dissolved oxygen;

Whereas more than 50 percent of the wetlands that existed in the contiguous United States 200 years ago are now gone, greatly diminishing the natural mechanisms of flood control and water cleansing;

Whereas Federal regulations hinder the implementation of innovative strategies that are necessary to meet the water needs of the Nation; and

Whereas comprehensive, innovative watershed plans that recognize the relationship between land use and water must be developed and implemented: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that the de-
3 partments and agencies of the Federal Government
4 should—

5 (1) coordinate, to the greatest extent possible,
6 Federal decisions and actions that affect water;

7 (2) ensure that each Federal decision or action
8 that affects water promotes, to the greatest extent
9 possible, the use of water in a sustainable manner;

10 (3) promote processes for developing com-
11 prehensive watershed plans that include all appro-
12 priate local and regional governments within water-
13 sheds and that consider the implications of land use
14 on water;

15 (4) consider the impact on entire watersheds
16 when making a Federal decision or taking a Federal
17 action that affects water;

18 (5) promote the involvement of citizen and envi-
19 ronmental groups and the business community in
20 watershed planning processes, and provide for such
21 involvement when making a Federal decision or tak-
22 ing a Federal action that affects water;

1 (6) establish clear standards for compliance
2 with Federal regulations affecting bodies of water or
3 water supplies; and

4 (7) provide flexibility for such compliance, using
5 market forces whenever possible.

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