This meeting today concerned the future of the steel industry and the Administration's commitment to work with Congress, the industry and labor to ensure that unfair and illegal imports are returned to pre-crisis levels. As my colleagues and constituents know, my commitment to the future stability and viability of our domestic steel industry—which is critical to the economic well-being of West Virginia—is unwavering, and for that reason I felt it necessary to remain at the White House for this important meeting.

Unfortunately, the vote on the Smith Amendment was called earlier than anticipated, and I missed the vote. I would have voted against the Smith Amendment if I could have been in the chamber because I believe in funding for the arts, including the National Endowment for the Arts. I take comfort in the fact that the lopsided margin meant that my vote was not necessary to ensure funding for the NEA. I understand that some have challenged NEA's funding decisions in recent years, but I believe the agency has done an admirable job in modifying its policies and decision making process to respond to concerns. Thanks to these efforts, the NEA is a stronger organization. The arts and the NEA contribute greatly to our culture, and it is a valuable investment in my view.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I add my voice in support of the National Endowment of the Arts, and in opposition to Senator SMITH's amendment. The NEA continues to provide valuable seed money to support a range of worthy endeavors, such as orchestras, inner-city arts outreach programs and efforts to preserve vanishing American cultural institutions. In addition, the NEA plays a strong role in promoting private investment in the arts and helps to bring culture to those Americans who are ordinarily unable to afford access to the arts. As a country, we ought to continue to support these efforts. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I compliment both the Senator from Nevada and the Senator from West Virginia on very thoughtful and fascinating statements on this matter.

I move to table the Smith amendment and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table amendment No. 1569.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) are necessarily absent.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 80, nays 16, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 260 Leg.]

YEAS—80

Abraham	Edwards	Lugar
Akaka	Enzi	McConnell
Baucus	Feingold	Mikulski
Bayh	Feinstein	Moynihan
Bennett	Frist	Murkowski
Biden	Gorton	Murray
Bingaman	Graham	Reed
Bond	Grams	Reid
Boxer	Grassley	Robb
Breaux	Gregg	Roberts
Bryan	Harkin	Roth
Burns	Hatch	Santorum
Byrd	Hollings	Sarbanes
Campbell	Hutchison	Schumer
Chafee	Inouye	Shelby
Cleland	Jeffords	Smith (OR)
Cochran	Johnson	Snowe
Collins	Kennedy	Specter
Conrad	Kerrey	Stevens
Coverdell	Kerry	Thomas
Craig	Kohl	Thompson
Daschle	Lautenberg	Torricelli
DeWine	Leahy	Voinovich
Dodd	Levin	Warner
Domenici	Lieberman	Wellstone
Dorgan	Lincoln	Wyden
Durbin	Lott	

NAYS—16

Ashcroft	Helms	Nickles
Brownback	Hutchinson	Sessions
Bunning	Inhofe	Smith (NH)
Fitzgerald	Kyl	Thurmond
Gramm	Mack	
Hagel	McCain	

NOT VOTING—4

Allard	Landrieu
Crapo	Rockefeller

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY S. 1429

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 1:06 this afternoon the Senate begin consideration of the reconciliation conference report, notwithstanding the receipt of the papers, and there be 6 hours for debate to be equally divided in the usual form with the vote to occur at the conclusion or yielding back of the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ROBB. Reserving the right to object, may I ask a question of the majority leader.

Is it the majority leader's intention to return to the underlying bill, the Interior appropriations bill, at the conclusion of consideration of the tax bill today?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, to respond to the Senator's question, it is. When we complete reconciliation, at the conclusion of this 6 hours or yielding back time, which theoretically could occur, then when that is completed our intent is to go back to the Interior appropriations bill.

The agreement we had last week was that this week we would try to complete these two appropriations bills, Agriculture and Interior, complete the reconciliation conference report, and try to get as many nominations confirmed as we could get cleared on both sides.

We are still assiduously pursuing that goal.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, continuing to reserve the right to object, I ask the majority leader, without specifically asking for an additional unanimous consent request, that if it is his intention to proceed, those of us who have been waiting through two sessions to either raise points of order, offer amendments, or whatever the case may be, to the Interior appropriations bill, might be able to do so tonight after conclusion of this bill. I am in full agreement with the expedition of a number of matters that have been pending on this floor, particularly some of the appointments. While I may not favor the tax bill that will be taken up this afternoon, I am in favor of moving the trains.

With that, if the majority leader is prepared to give that verbal understanding his concurrence, I will not object.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I give my concurrence in that. We intend to return to the Interior appropriations bill. I believe the distinguished manager of this legislation would be glad to agree we would go to this issue immediately upon return, with a vote if one is required.

Mr. GORTON. If the majority leader will yield, I would be delighted to have the first item to be dealt with, with respect to the Interior appropriations bill, immediately after the vote on the tax bill, be the point of order the Senator from Virginia wishes to raise.

Mr. ROBB. Will the majority leader include that particular provision in his unanimous consent request?

Mr. LOTT. I am glad to make that additional request in my unanimous consent request.

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

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, to my absolute surprise and delight, I understand the water resources development bill has been completed in conference. I extend my hearty congratulations to the managers and to the distinguished chairman of the committee, Senator CHAFEE, for his efforts in getting that conclusion.

I yield the floor to him for a consent request with regard to that conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany S. 507.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 507), have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by a majority of the conferees.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of today.)

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statement relating to the conference report be printed in the RECORD.

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

The conference report was agreed to.

Mr. CHAFEE. I thank the majority leader for moving this legislation along, and I thank all concerned.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, as a member of the minority who had the honor to be a conferee, may I say that this legislation of great importance could not have happened in the absence of our chairman. Our chairman did a superb job, never an easy one with the other side. But here it is before us and he is to be congratulated. I, for one, am deeply grateful.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from New York. He has headed many of these conferences. I particularly recall some of the transportation conferences he has headed in which he did landmark work. Having kind words coming from him and praises is doubly important to me. I greatly appreciate them. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, today the Senate is considering the conference report to accompany S. 507, the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. This measure, similar to water resources legislation enacted in 1986, 1988, 1990 and 1992, is comprised of water resources project and study authorizations, as well as important policy initiatives, for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program.

This bill was introduced by Senator WARNER at the beginning of this year. In previous years, the Senator from Virginia had been the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee of the Senate. In that role he guided a similar bill through the Senate during the previous Congress. We are very grateful for his hard work on this legislation and sticking with the project considering the new demands on his time as chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Unfortunately, the House was unable to pass a companion measure last year because of a dispute over flood control and water supply in the State of California. So, this WRDA bill is somewhat overdue.

This year, S. 507 was adopted unanimously by the Senate on April 19, 1999. On April 29 of this year, the House of Representatives adopted its version of the legislation by a vote of 418 to 6.

Since that time, we have worked together with our colleagues from the House of Representatives and the administration to reach bipartisan agreement on a sensible compromise measure. Because of the numerous differences between the Senate- and House-passed bills, completion of this conference report has required many hours of negotiation.

To ensure that the items contained in this legislation are responsive to the nation's most pressing water infrastructure and environmental needs, we have adhered to a set of criteria established in previous water resources law. Mr. President, let me take a few moments here to discuss these criteria—that is—the criteria used by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to determine the merit of proposed projects, project studies and policy directives.

In 1986 Congress enacted and President Reagan signed a Water Resources Development Act that broke new ground. Importantly, the 1986 Act marked an end to the sixteen-year deadlock between Congress and the executive branch regarding authorization of the Army Corps Civil Works program.

In addition to authorizing numerous projects, the 1986 Act resolved longstanding disputes relating to cost-sharing between the Army Corps and nonfederal sponsors, waterway user fees, environmental requirements and, importantly, the types of projects in which federal involvement is appropriate and warranted.

Each flood control, navigation, environmental restoration, or other project requires a local cost share that is applied uniformly across the nation.

Second, projects are not authorized until various reports and studies have been completed to assure that the projects are justified from economic, engineering and environmental perspectives.

Third, projects must fit within the traditional mission of the civil works program of the Army Corps. That mission includes flood control, improvements to navigation, shoreline protection, and environmental restoration.

These are the precepts that we have applied to the provisions contained in the pending conference report. Although there are special circumstances that justify exceptions to every rule, I believe that this bill does a good job of adhering to the fundamental purposes and principles of the WRDA program.

Water resources legislation has been enacted on a biennial basis since 1986, with the exception of 1994.

The bill we are bringing back from conference today includes scores of projects with a total federal authorization of approximately $4.3 billion. Importantly, more than $1.5 billion of this amount will go toward environmental mitigation and restoration and water cleanup projects for sewage discharges, stormwater retention, and the control of combined sewer overflows.

A bill like this takes hard work by many parties. I would like to salute our Senate conferees, Senators SMITH, BAUCUS, MOYNIHAN, VOINOVICH, and BOXER. As I said earlier, Senator WARNER has been the key player on this bill as its author, manager and member of the conference committee.

Senate staff playing a key role on this bill included Ann Loomis for Senator WARNER and JoEllen Darcy for Senator BAUCUS. On my staff, first Dan Delich and, after he left us, Abigail Kinnison and Chelsea Henderson, have worked many long hours to make this bill possible.

On the House side, the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman SHUSTER, and committee members, Congressman OBERSTAR and Congressman BOEHLERT deserve high praise for their work. We thank them very much for the spirit of compromise they brought to the conference and for their efforts to complete this task before the recess.

I am pleased to bring this conference report to the Senate. I trust that those who every day depend on the fine work of the Corps of Engineers to protect their lives and their livelihoods will benefit greatly from the legislative work that has been done.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to support the adoption of the Conference Report to accompany S. 507, The Water Resources Development Act of 1999, WRDA.

As we all know, the Water Resources Development Act of 1998 passed this Chamber last year, but was never enacted. This Conference Report builds upon the work done on that legislation and includes some additional projects and programs for the Army Corps of Engineers. With the adoption of this conference report, we wrap up some unfinished business from the 105th Congress and are back on course for development of a Water Resources Development Act for 2000.

S. 507 authorizes projects for flood control, navigation, shore protection, environmental restoration, water supply storage and recreation, as well as several studies which will be the basis for future Corps projects. The projects have the support of a local sponsor willing to share the cost of the project with the Federal Government.

Many of the projects contained in this bill are necessary to protect the nation's shorelines, along oceans, lakes and rivers. Several of the navigation projects need timely authorization in order to keep our ports competitive in the global marketplace. The projects will be reviewed by the Army Corps of Engineers and must be in the federal

interest, technologically feasible, economically justified and environmentally sound in order to go forward. In other words, these are projects worthy of our support.

Furthermore, the bill authorizes studies, including a comprehensive, cumulative impact study of the Yellowstone River in my home state of Montana, that need to get underway so that we can make informed decisions about the future use and management of these precious resources.

In addition, the conference report contains a new continuing authorities program, known as Challenge 21. This program, proposed by the Administration and supported by the conferees, emphasizes non-structural flood damage reduction measures and riverine and wetland ecosystem measures that conserve, restore and manage the natural functions and values of the floodplain. We hope that this new program will integrate needed flood damage reduction with the ecosystem in a more natural way than traditional brick and mortar. Programs like Challenge 21 will help move the traditional Corps' mission into the next century.

I am pleased the conference report has been approved.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate today will enact the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. This important legislation continues the Corps of Engineers civil works critical mission to provide flood control, hurricane protection, river and harbor navigation improvements, environmental restoration of our nation's waterways and other water resource infrastructure improvements.

Since 1986 when the Congress and the Executive Branch reach agreement on landmark cost-sharing principles that apply to the preparation and construction of these projects, the Congress has endeavored to enact this reauthorization bill on a two-year cycle.

As the former Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Congress enacted a water resources reauthorization bill in 1996. Regrettably, due to the complexities involving a project to provide flood protection for the Sacramento, California area, the House and Senate were unable to resolve the differences concerning this project in 1998.

Today, the conference report before the Senate includes those projects in last year's bill along with other construction projects that the Corps of Engineers has reviewed and judged to be in the national interest. Through a comprehensive process to study and analyze the scope of individual projects, the Chief of the Corps of Engineers has found the 45 authorizations for new construction projects to be technically sound, economically justified and environmentally acceptable.

Mr. President, this simply means that the Federal taxpayer will receive a higher return on the economic benefits resulting from construction of these projects compared to the individual construction costs. Also, for these projects, a state or local government will provide from 35 percent to 50 percent of the costs of construction.

The Corps civil works program provides significant protection to lives and property from flooding and coastal storms. The maintenance of our river and harbor navigation channels are critical for us to maintain a competitive edge in a ''one-world'' economic market.

The value of water resource projects is well-documented. In 1997, Corps flood control projects prevented approximately $45.2 billion in damages. The Corps continues to support the navigation channel deepening projects so that the larger class of cargo ships and super coal colliers can call on our commercial water ports. The value of commerce on these waterways totaled over $600 billion in 1997, generating approximately 16 million jobs.

Mr. President, the conference report also contains very important provisions to strengthen and expand the Corps new focus on environmental restoration of our nation's waterways. We have established a new program, known as ''Challenge 21'', which provides the Corps with the direction to work with local communities to developed non-structural flood control projects. This is an initiative that will hopefully produce less-costly flood control options. This program will be important to financially-strapped communities who may not be able to afford to provide the 35 percent local costs for a traditional flood control project. Also, this program will foster the preservation of sensitive ecosystems that provide vital flood protection in the floodplain.

Challenge 21 also has the potential to produce significant savings in the reduction of flood damages and Federal flood damage assistance costs.

Mr. President, since the enactment of the 1986 water resources bill which established cost-sharing requirements for the construction of water projects, I have been committed to applying these requirements to projects authorized in subsequent bills. I applaud my Senate colleagues for enacting Senate legislation that adhere to these rules. The cost-sharing requirements have been successful in leveraging non-Federal funds and they have ensured that only those projects with the greatest merit, economic benefit and local support move forward.

It was my view, along with Chairman CHAFEE and the Ranking member, Senator BAUCUS, that we must insist on the cost-sharing requirement for projects authorized in this bill. I regret, however, that the conference report does not apply the cost-sharing principles in all cases.

I would just ask my House and Senate colleagues to remember the 10-year stalemate that existed between the Congress and the Executive Branch from 1975 to 1986. At that time no water resource projects moved forward because the Executive Branch insisted on some level financial contribution from those who would benefit from these projects. By 1986, the Congress and the Administration reached agreement on a fair allocation of costs and since that time there has been an orderly process for planning, designing and constructing water resource projects.

We must not abandon cost-sharing rules, or else there is the very real possibility of again triggering a halt to Federal funding for these important projects. I will continue to work to follow the requirements of the 1986 bill and stand ready to work with my colleagues on this issue.

Mr. President, this legislation, which was three years in the making, involved a great deal of staff time and commitment. I want to express my appreciation to the staff of the Environment and Public Works Committee—Jimmie Powell, the Staff Director, Dan Delich, Abigail Kinnison, Chelsea Henderson, Jo-Ellen Darcy, Ellen Stein and Peter Washburn for all of their efforts. Also, the professional expertise of the Corps of Engineers was invaluable. I particularly want to thank Larry Prather, Gary Campbell and the many dedicated professionals at the Corps of Engineers Headquarters for their technical evaluation of the many projects that came before the Committee for consideration.

Mr. President, I urge the adoption of the conference report.

THE SAVANNAH HARBOR DEEPENING PROJECT

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise to request that the Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee help me to clarify the intent of the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project that appears in Section 102 of the 1999 Water Resources Development Act. It is my understanding that this legislation authorizes a project to deepen the Savannah River channel to a depth of up to 48 feet subject to a favorable report by the Chief of Engineers and a favorable recommendation of the Secretary by December 31, 1998.

Mr. CHAFEE. The senior Senator from Georgia is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. It is my understanding as well, that both the Chief of Engineer's Tier I Environmental Impact Statement and Feasibility Report provide for the establishment of a stakeholders' evaluation group which will have early and consistent involvement in the project, and as part of the process, the EIS requires the development of a mitigation plan to fully and adequately address predicted and potential adverse impacts on, among other things, the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge; striped bass population; short-nose sturgeon; salt water and fresh water wetlands; chloride levels; dissolved oxygen levels; erosion; and historical resources. Is that correct?

Mr. CHAFEE. That is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. It is my further understanding that before this project is carried out, the Secretary, in consultation with affected federal and nonfederal entities, must develop a mitigation plan addressing adverse project impacts and that the plan must be implemented in advance of or concurrent with project construction and must ensure that the project cost estimates are sufficient to address all potential mitigation alternatives. Is that correct?

Mr. CHAFEE. That is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thank the Chairman for his assistance and look forward to working with him on this important matter.

Mr. CLELAND. Will the Chairman yield for two additional questions on this project?

Mr. CHAFEE. I would be happy to answer any questions the Senator may have.

Mr. CLELAND. As the Senator recalls, during the Senate's consideration of the Water Resources Development Act in the 105th Congress, we discussed the matter of whether the bill authorized the Secretary or the Georgia Ports Authority to proceed with construction of the project without the respective department heads concurring on an appropriate implementation plan and mitigation plan and that it was our understanding that the bill did not provide such authority. In this current version, is this still your understanding?

Mr. CHAFEE. The Senator's understanding is correct.

Mr. CLELAND. Further, is it still the Senator's understanding that any funds to be appropriated by Congress for the project must be allocated in a manner that ensures that project impacts are fully and adequately mitigated and are otherwise consistent with the mitigation plan developed by the Secretary and the stakeholder evaluation group?

Mr. CHAFEE. That is correct.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the Chairman for the opportunity to clarify these understandings.

HOWARD HANSON DAM

Mr. GORTON. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Committee for its efforts to help resolve several very important and contentious issues affecting the Howard Hanson Dam project in Washington state.

I applaud the Howard Hanson provision in the Managers Statement accompanying this legislation, which recognizes the ongoing negotiations between the Corps of Engineers and the National Marine Fisheries Service with respect to the Corps' responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act for the protection of threatened Puget Sound Chinook Salmon. These fish runs are directly impacted by the Corps of Engineers' operation of Howard Hanson Dam and, as a consequence, the Corps will be asked to bear responsibility for these impacts under the ESA.

I appreciate the Committee's acknowledgment that the requirements of ESA might force a revision of the cost allocation for the Howard Hanson project. Given the urgent need to have mitigation measures in place as soon as possible to protect salmon runs in the Puget Sound region, is it the Committee's intent that the Corps provide a proposal for a cost reallocation to the Committee for consideration in the Water Resources Development Act for the year 2000?

Mr. CHAFEE. It is the Committee's intent to urge the Corps and the National Marine Fisheries Service to complete their ESA consultation expeditiously so that a cost share adjustment can be considered by the Committee in a timely manner.

Mr. GORTON. I thank the Chairman.

AMERICAN RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues on the Committee on Environment and Public Works, and Senator VOINOVICH, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and my ranking member, Senator BAUCUS, a question on the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 as we prepare to give approval to the conference report.

Mr. VOINOVICH. I will be happy to respond to the Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I first thank the leadership of this distinguished committee and its members for their perseverance in working to finally pass the Water Resources Development Act, WRDA, an effort that has taken about a year. I also want to say how I appreciate Senator VOINOVICH's leadership as our new chairman of the subcommittee.

Despite our hard work and achievements, I am disappointed at the outcome in conference on the American River Watershed project. We failed to include the Senate program for providing a 170-year level of flood protection for the City of Sacramento in the American River Watershed. The Senate bill represented the local consensus agreement to increase in the level of flood protection for our state capital, Sacramento. Sacramento's 400,000 residents, 130 schools and 5,000 businesses are located in the flood plain at the confluence of the Sacramento River flowing from the north and the American River, which cascades from the High Sierra mountains, from the east. The most likely cause of a flood would be a breach in the American River levees which could inundate 55,000 acres.

The damages from even a 100-year flood would be comparable to the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake which caused 63 deaths, almost 4,000 injuries and $8 billion in direct property damage. Sacramento has one of the highest levels of risk and one of the lowest levels of protection.

There was a year-long effort to pressure this Congress to link extraneous water supply projects to this flood control measure, despite the fact that by unanimous vote in the Senate and a 418-to-6 vote in the House, WRDA bills were approved with no special set aside for water supply projects in California that would override the water agreements and planning processes that have taken years of sweat, blood and tears to put into place. We were able in this conference to stop inclusion of those water supply projects, and we achieved an increase in the level of protection for Sacramento from 90-year to 140-year level of protection. However, this level is unacceptable. It still puts 400,000 people at too high a risk of disaster.

I would like to ask the leadership of the Environment and Public Works Committee Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure if they believe as I do that this conference report reflects only an incremental step in our efforts to increase protection for Sacramento and that more needs to be done to remove this risk.

Mr. BAUCUS. I look forward to working with the Senator on more improvements for flood protection for Sacramento in subsequent WRDA bills.

Mr. VOINOVICH. The Senator from California is correct. We have provided important improvements for the flood protection for Sacramento. However, we can do better, and I think we should consider increased protection in the future.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank my colleagues. I do note that, while I am disappointed at the outcome on the American River, this bill does provide numerous benefits for my state of California. The new dredging project for the Port of Oakland will enhance international trade and the regional economy and enable new efficiencies at the port to be undertaken with the new intermodal terminal. In addition, the dredge spoil will help restore wetlands in Marin County where a portion of the former Hamilton Army Airfield is being used for environmental restoration. We have new flood protection plans authorized in Santa Clara, the Yuba River Basin, Sacramento area, the City of Santa Cruz, and Fresno County. We have priority designations throughout the state for the new riverine ecosystem restoration program to encourage natural flood control systems and we have assistance for important new water reclamation projects in the San Ramon Valley and the South Bay area of Los Angeles.

But more work needs to be done to protect Sacramento, and we will address those needs in the next WRDA bill. I yield the floor.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise in support of the conference agreement on the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 which provides for the development and improvement of our Nation's water resources infrastructure. This legislation authorizes water resource projects of vital importance to our nation's and our states' economy and maritime industry as well as our environment.

I am particularly pleased that the measure includes a number of provisions for which I have fought to ensure

the future health of the Port of Baltimore and of Maryland's environment.

First the bill authorizes nearly $28 million for needed improvements to Baltimore Harbor Anchorages and Channels. Many of the existing anchorages and branch channels within Baltimore Harbor were built in the first half of this century and are no longer deep enough, wide enough or long enough to accommodate the vessels now calling on the Port of Baltimore. Many of the larger ships must now anchor some 25 miles south of Baltimore in naturally deep water, resulting in delays and increased costs to the shipping industry. Also, the narrow widths of some of the branch channels result in additional time for the pilots to maneuver safely to and from their docking berths. In June 1998 the Chief of Engineers approved a report which recommended a number of improvements including: (1) widening and deepening Federal anchorages 3 and 4; (2) widening and providing flared corners for state-owned East Dundalk, Seagirt, Connecting and West Dundalk branch Channels; (3) dredging a new branch channel at South Locust Point; and (4) dredging a turning basin at the head of the Fort McHenry Channel. The report identified the project as ''technically sound, economically justified and environmentally and socially acceptable.'' This project has been a top priority of mine, of the Maryland Port Administration and of the shipping community for many years and I am delighted that this legislation will enable us to move forward with this important project.

Second, the legislation directs the Corps of Engineers to make critically needed safety improvements to the Tolchester Channel in the Chesapeake Bay. The Tolchester Channel is a vital link in the Baltimore Port system. It was authorized in the River and Harbor Act of 1958 and aligned to take advantage of the naturally deep water in the Chesapeake Bay, along Maryland's Eastern Shore. This alignment, which is shaped like an ''S,'' has posed a serious navigation problem and safety risks for vessels. Ships must change course five times within three miles, often beginning a new turn, sometimes in the opposite direction, before completing a first turn. With vessels nearly 1,000 feet in length, it is difficult to safely navigate the channel, particularly in poor weather conditions. The U.S. Coast Guard and the Maryland Pilots Association have expressed serious concerns over the safety of the area and have long recommended straightening of the channel due to the grounding and ''near misses'' which have occurred in the area. The cost for straightening the Tolchester ''S-turn'' is estimated at $12.6 million with $1.3 million coming from non-federal sources. This authorization enables the Corps to proceed expeditiously with these improvements and address the serious concerns of those who must navigate the treacherous channel. With $5.8 million already included in the fiscal 2000 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, this provision will ensure that these improvements will be undertaken in the near future.

Mr. President, the Port of Baltimore is one of the great ports of the world and one of Maryland's most important economic assets. The Port generates $2 billion in annual economic activity, provides for an estimated 62,000 jobs, and more than $500 million a year in State and local tax revenues and customs receipts. These two projects will help assure the continued vitality of the Port of Baltimore into the 21st Century.

In addition to port development and improvement projects, the measure contains a provision which will help significantly to enhance Maryland's environment and quality of life and help achieve the goals and vision of the Potomac American Heritage River designation.

It authorizes $15 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to modify the existing flood protection project at Cumberland, Maryland to restore features of the historic Chesapeake and Ohio Canal adversely affected by construction and operation of the project. Mr. President, the C&O Canal is widely regarded as the Nation's finest relic of America's canal building era. It was begun in 1828 as a transportation route between commercial centers in the East and frontier resources of the West. It reached Cumberland in 1850 and continued operating until 1924 when it succumbed to floods and financial failure. In the early 1950's, a section of the Canal and turning basin at its Cumberland terminus was filled in by the Corps of Engineers during construction of a local flood protection project. Portions of the Canal were proclaimed a national monument in 1961 and it was officially established as a national historical park in 1971. Justice Douglas described the park ''* * * not yet marred by the roar of wheels and the sound of horns. * * * The stretch of 185 miles of country from Washington to Cumberland, Maryland, is one of the most fascinating and picturesque in the Nation.''

The National Park Service, as part of its General Management Plan for the Park, has long sought to rebuild and re-water the Canal at its Cumberland terminus. The NPS entered into a Memorandum of Agreement, MOA, with the Corps to undertake a study of the feasibility of reconstructing the last 2200 feet of the canal to the terminus, through and adjacent to the Corps' flood protection project. The Corps completed this study in July 1995 and determined that ''it is feasible to re-water the canal successfully; the canal and flood protection levee can co-exist on the site without compromising the flood protection for the City of Cumberland; re-construction and partial operation of the locks is feasible; and, based on the as-built information available, underground utility impacts can be mitigated at reasonable cost to allow construction of the canal and turning basin in basically the same alignment and configuration as the original canal.'' A subsequent Re-watering Design Analysis estimated the total project cost at $15 million. This authorization will enable the Corps to proceed with restoring a 1.1 mile stretch of the C&O Canal and revitalize the area as a major hub for tourism and economic development.

The conference agreement also authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to undertake a study for control and management of waterborne debris on the Susquehanna River. The Susquehanna River is the largest tributary of the Chesapeake Bay, draining an area of about 27,500 square miles. It is also one of the most flood prone river basins in the nation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates several reservoirs for flood control and other purposes and there are three large hydroelectric dams on the lower Susquehanna. During high flow events, enormous amounts of debris, including trees, branches and manmade materials, are carried downstream and ultimately into the Chesapeake Bay. Most recently, the flood waters of January 1999 deposited tremendous amounts of debris as far as Anne Arundel County, Maryland, creating hazards to navigation, damaging boats and bulkheads, aggravating flooding and clogging beaches and shorelines. This legislation will enable the Corps of Engineers to evaluate the economic, engineering and environmental feasibility of potential measures to control and manage the amount of waterborne debris as well as determine if new and improved debris removal technologies can be utilized in the Susquehanna.

Finally, the conference agreement includes several other provisions which will help address important water resource needs in Maryland and nearby communities including the flood protection project for the District of Columbia, and the studies for the West View Shores Community of Cecil County, Welch Point and Chesapeake City, MD.

I want to compliment the distinguished chairmen of the Committee and the Subcommittee, Senators CHAFEE and WARNER, and the ranking member, Senator BAUCUS, for their leadership in crafting this legislation and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure.

TAXPAYER REFUND AND RELIEF ACT OF 1999—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I submit a report of the committee of conference on the bill (H.R. 2488) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to sections 105 and 211 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2000, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The report will be stated.

The Legislative clerk read as follows: