

**STATEMENT OF HON. FRED R. HARRIS, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE
STATE OF OKLAHOMA**

Senator HARRIS. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I wonder if I could not simply file my statement and excerpt from it and summarize it after saying that I heartily endorse the comments of my senior colleague.

With your permission, I would like to just summarize and file the statement.

The CHAIRMAN. Very well. The entire statement will be included in the record, Senator Harris, and you may give us a summary of it.

(The document referred to follows:)

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the provisions of S. 2828, which prohibits the Secretary of the Army from collecting fees for entrance to or use of projects under the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Chairman, until recently it has been the policy of the United States Congress and of the Executive Branch that access to and use of lakes, reservoirs and rivers created or improved by the Federal Government under its public works program should be free for the mutual benefit of the general public. Freedom of access to and use of the waters of the United States dates back to the Ordinance of 1787 which specified that no fee or toll could be charged for the use of the nation's waterways. This policy of free use of the nation's waterways also was reiterated in 1830 by President Andrew Jackson in his second annual message when he stated, "All improvements effected by the funds of the nation for general use should be open to the enjoyment of all our fellow citizens exempt from payment of tolls or any imposition of that character." The Congress further emphasized the free use of the waterways of the United States in the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1882. This legislation stated that waterways would be free from tolls or user charges. Ever since that time the Congress has continually adhered to a policy of freedom from tolls or user charges on our nation's lakes and inland waterways.

Mr. Chairman, since the first Rivers and Harbors Act was enacted in 1826, it has been the feeling of Congress that the development and full utilization of our inland waters is sound national policy. Through the public works programs administered by the Corps of Engineers we in the United States developed not only an outstanding transportation system on our inland rivers but we have also created flood protection, municipal and industrial water supply, irrigation and recreational facilities for our citizens.

The economic benefits which have accrued as a result of our water resources development program have more than offset the cost of constructing these projects. The savings to the people through the flood protection provided by our reservoirs has been tremendous. Revenues collected by the Federal Government through the sale of hydroelectric power and through the sale of water for municipal and industrial uses have offset a great deal of the cost of constructing the projects. Low cost transportation on the inland navigation projects has resulted in a great savings to both the shipper and the consumers. These items all contribute to the economic justification of our water-related public works projects; and it is a proven fact that over the years the economy has gained sufficiently to offset the cost of constructing all the water resources projects which are now in operation. Fortunately and rightfully, an important by-product of any lake or reservoir or river improvement project is the availability of a new recreational facility to be used by the general public. Many of the projects now being administered by the Corps of Engineers were highly controversial at the time of their conception. As you know, Mr. Chairman, my state of Oklahoma has led the way in water resources development and in the conservation of our water for the use of future generations. The progress Oklahoma has made in the field of water resources development has not always enjoyed popular support. Many of the dams which now impound water in Oklahoma have brought about the inundation of large amounts of farm land and in some cases have even resulted in the relocation of small communities. A number of these projects were accepted and supported