

by local citizens only because the construction of the reservoir would create an outstanding recreational facility and thus would bring about a boost to the local economy through increased tourism.

Although there has never to my knowledge been a reservoir constructed in the United States for the sole purpose of providing increased recreational opportunities, it is nonetheless a fact that no reservoir could be constructed without the automatic by-product of recreational benefits. Thus, regardless of the prime purpose of constructing the reservoir—be it flood control, irrigation, water supply, or navigation—recreation becomes an inherent by-product of almost every project. Unlike a national park, which can be fenced off and closed to public use, and unlike a national forest, which can be operated with controlled access, and unlike a wildlife refuge, which can be closed to public access, a man-made lake with hundreds of miles of shoreline cannot be closed easily to the public. People are going to seek out the lakes to use for fishing, boating and swimming and they expect to use them for these purposes without charge. I feel they should be able to use these large bodies of water for recreational purposes, and I feel that they should be able to use them without paying a toll or fee.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act passed the Congress in 1964 prior to the time that I became a member of the United States Senate. However, since coming to the Senate, I have vigorously fought to restrict the provisions of that Act insofar as it relates to projects administered by the Corps of Engineers. As I have stated earlier, Oklahoma has taken the lead in water resources development in the nation. During the planning stages of many of our large reservoirs in Oklahoma public hearings were held in which the benefits of the project were discussed in detail with the local citizens. Recreation was consistently cited as a benefit which would accrue to the area in which the reservoir was to be located. However, at no time during these public hearings was any mention made to the local citizens that they would have to pay a fee in order to fish or swim or go boating on one of these reservoirs. Thus, practically every reservoir in Oklahoma was supported by the local citizens with the understanding that recreational uses of the reservoir would be free to the general public. Then, in 1964, the Congress enacted the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and repudiated the long standing policy of the United States Government that access to and use of the rivers and lakes of our country should forever be free. After the enactment of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation instructed the United States Army Corps of Engineers to implement a system of collecting fees in connection with the use of these reservoirs for recreational purposes. I feel that the implementation of this program represents a radical change in the policy the people of the areas were led to expect. Furthermore, I feel that the imposition of fees or charges for the use of these reservoirs for recreational purposes represents an undue burden on those among us who are least able to pay. Most of the reservoirs in Oklahoma are located in the eastern part of our state which has been recognized by the United States Department of Commerce as one of the most underdeveloped areas of the entire country. A high percentage of the population of this area are old-age pensioners or welfare recipients on fixed incomes. Thus, for these people to pay a fee in order to take advantage of the only recreational facilities at their disposal is inconsistent with our goals to give poor people an equal opportunity to enjoy recreation and relaxation with our more fortunate citizens.

Further, Mr. Chairman, I feel that the collection of fees in connection with recreational use of our lakes and reservoirs represents in effect double taxation. The Congress, over a hundred and fifty years ago, determined that it is sound public investment to develop the water resources of our country. Thus, we have used our taxpayer's money for over a hundred and fifty years to construct, operate and maintain lakes and reservoirs and inland navigation systems. These investments have been recovered many times over through the economic benefits of flood control, navigation generation and water supply. Therefore, since the public has paid for the projects initially, and the economic benefits derived through the existence of the projects have been greater than the initial cost, the collection of a fee on these projects for recreational use at this time represents an additional tax on the public.

Aside from the fact that our policy has always been that of freedom of our waterways and lakes and reservoirs, the collection of fees on Corps of Engineers projects has been found to be unsound economically. For instance, Mr. Chairman, since the initiation of the fee system under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act in 1965, up to August of 1967, the revenue derived from the sale of rec-