

Let me close, Mr. Chairman, by way of summary: First, we all recognize it has been the long-standing policy of the U.S. Government that access to and use of waters of the United States should be free to the general public. Second, the public support of our national waterways program has in many instances hinged upon the free recreational benefits that were to accumulate as a result of reservoirs constructed and rivers improved. Third, the revenues collected through entrance and user fees are a minor part of the total land and water conservation fund. The cost of collection and difficulty of administering the fee program on Corps of Engineers projects is, I submit, uneconomical and unrealistic.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I hope that you will give careful consideration to S. 2828 and that you will be able to report favorably on it so that the Congress can act upon it this year.

I think you again for allowing us to appear.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Harris and Senator Monroney.

Obviously your bill raises the whole question of user fees in general. The committee will take a very careful look at this in connection with the hearings we are holding on the other bills that are before us today.

Your bill would prohibit the corps from collecting any fees in connection with the use of any boating facilities and so forth. Would this mean that a private entrepreneur could collect fees for such purpose?

Senator HARRIS. Of course, we would feel that he certainly should not have the power to do so.

The CHAIRMAN. I wanted to clarify that.

As I interpret S. 2828, I think that there is no prohibition in here on the part of a private entrepreneur who has a boating facility and gets a license or a permit from the Corps to build facilities and collects fees from the public. This is a point I wish you would take a look at and we could go into it a little later.

Senator HARRIS. We will look into that. I appreciate your calling it to our attention.

My objections do not go so stringently to the user fees, although I object to them also, as they do to the general entrance fees. That is user fees where services or facilities are being especially and particularly provided may have some justification. That is not the case, it seems to me, that we generally have where the entrance fee is collected.

We will take a look at the question you raise, and I appreciate your raising it.

Senator MONRONEY. My idea is this: This would not affect the normal concessionaire relationship. If the Army Engineers grant concessions, for example, for motorboats or water skiing or services that they are rendering, I would think and I feel sure that it is the custom today, that the Army Engineers in their management would set a maximum amount of fee that the concessionaire could charge for his very definite service in the rental of equipment of that kind.

The CHAIRMAN. Of equipment, yes. But I am talking about the boating facility, the use of the actual facility for docking purposes that he would construct pursuant to a permit from the Corps.

Senator MONRONEY. I would not think he would be allowed to charge for docking purposes but he would perhaps be allowed to charge whatever the going rate is for fuel, gasoline, or oil.