With these problems in mind, the chairman has proposed a bill, S. 1401, which I am privileged to cosponsor, which should meet (1) the need to have adequate funds to purchase park and recreation lands and waters before they are priced out of reach or committed irretrievably to other uses, and (2) the need to acquire property as quickly as possible after congressional or State authorization of park and recreation areas.

S. 1401 solves the first problem by providing for additional revenues to the land and water conservation fund from that portion of the Outer Continental Shelf leasing revenues which presently goes into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts. Additional revenues will be provided by the receipts accrued under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 and certain Forest Service receipts.

These earnings, which represent the earnings of the American people from their land resources, should be returned to the people in the form of a new and lasting land resource, parks, and recreation areas.

I will listen carefully to the testimony at this hearing, but my present inclination is to recommend that S. 1401 be reported without providing for the annual $200 million ceiling suggested by the administration, or the 5-year limitation found in S. 1401. We must complete the projects which Congress has authorized to date, and it would be foolish to pass legislation which would assure that we must come back to Congress in a few years for more help.

The problem of land price escalation for public park and recreation areas is staggering. The Point Reyes National Seashore is a horrible example of the problem. The 1962 act establishing that seashore carried a $14 million price tag. Congress has boosted the ceiling slightly, to $19,135,000, but it has already been put on notice that the final cost may run in excess of $55 million.

S. 1401 contains several very important tools which may go a long way in cutting down the ultimate cost of parkland.

The most important factor in controlling land price is time. If property can be acquired quickly, it can be acquired at less cost. S. 1401 authorizes the head of an agency to obligate the Federal Government by contract in advance of actual appropriations. This authority is limited to the next 2 fiscal years and to an amount not exceeding $30 million per year. It applies only to areas where Congress has already by law authorized the acquisition of land.

Often years elapse between the proposal of a new park and the enactment of park bill. An average of 9 months elapses between the enactment of a park bill and the first appropriation of money to acquire land for that park. During this critical period land prices continue to inflate—due largely to the creation of a one-buyer market. If the Secretary had authority to commit the Government to a reasonable price as soon as the bill was enacted, the price rise could be checked.

Section 2 of S. 1401 authorizes a sellback and leaseback program for the national park system. I am quite anxious to hear testimony on this proposal. It may have great potential for reducing the cost of parks, but it is a change in park policy of such a fundamental nature that this committee should be thoroughly acquainted with its implications.