

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT F. NELSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR,
VIRGINIA TRAVEL COUNCIL**

Mr. NELSON. Mr. Chairman, I thank you, because tomorrow the House has a hearing by a similar committee, and it is a little difficult to be in two places at the same time.

Senator CHURCH. Fine.

Mr. NELSON. My name is Robert F. Nelson, and I am the managing director of the Virginia Travel Council, of Richmond, Va. We are a nonprofit, statewide organization, consisting of 35 segments of private business, serving or otherwise dependent on travel.

I am here at the request of the board of directors of the council to request you as a committee to take every possible action to expedite the passage of S. 1401, a bill to amend title I of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. This action is of paramount importance to the 22,000 businesses that are licensed in Virginia to serve 40 million visitors who come each year. Without the knowledge that at least \$4 million of Federal funds may be available for matching purposes, the Virginia General Assembly, now in session, is unlikely to place this sum at the disposal of the Virginia Commission on Outdoor Recreation.

As many of these remarks are repetitious, and to save your time, I simply want to emphasize one or two points. We have had over the years no outdoor recreation policy in the State of Virginia except a policy by the game and fisheries of our State which was made possible by segregated funds, which made a certain amount of money available.

This program has created a program for Virginia that is based on completion in the year 2000, a program which contemplates the expenditure of \$2 million a year on fish and wildlife development in the State. That plan has been filed with our commission. It would provide for the construction at this time of 38 new State parks. As was stated earlier, Virginia for 30 years abandoned its State park system, insofar as financing it and maintaining it is concerned, and we need to make up time.

Your funds and your help made it possible for us to start six or seven State parks. I believe it is now seven, one having been given the State, during the last 2 years, instead of the 38 that we need.

The reason we need them is because we have been so long about doing anything. Another thing that I would like to point out is that in Virginia there are 40 establishments of the Armed Forces and in these 40 establishments we have a permanent population of approximately that of the State of Nevada. Many of these people are in our Navy and are quartered out of the 5th Naval District, and are all over the seas, but they and their families require a tremendous amount of recreational attention, which we have not given them, and which we would like to give them, and which we call to your attention.

Thank you.

Senator CHURCH. Thank you very much.

We had a similar experience in my State, with a long dormant State park program that simply had no funding whatever until this land and water conservation fund became available, and that stimulated the legislature to provide matching money, and now we are moving ahead with a very sizable and encouraging program. I think it demonstrates what can be done, with a stimulus of this kind coming from the Federal