

THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY ASSOCIATION,
New Orleans, La., January 31, 1968.

HON. HENRY M. JACKSON,
Chairman, Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, U.S. Senate, Senate Office
Building, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR JACKSON: The Mississippi Valley Association desires to be placed on record in support of S. 2828 introduced by Senator Harris on January 18. Because of schedule conflicts, it will not be possible for me to attend the hearing on February 5 and 6, 1968, to present our testimony in person. It is requested, therefore, that the contents of this letter be made a part of the hearing record.

The Mississippi Valley Association with membership extending into 36 states has, since its founding in 1919, espoused the proper development and wise management of our water and soil resources, and we feel that the impositions of charges or fees at Army Corps of Engineers reservoirs that this legislation would prevent is not wise management.

Through the years we have seen continuing efforts on the part of agencies of the Federal Government to impose taxes or user charges on our waterways. The Valley Association has resisted these efforts and will continue to do so since these efforts are contrary to the basic foundation upon which our waterways were developed. Aside from the historic and constitutional philosophies involved, we have resisted and opposed the imposition of these taxes or user charges on the basis that they would impose a second charge for these waterways on the taxpayers who have paid for their construction in the first instance. It is not proper that the American taxpayer be required to pay a second time for a commodity he has already purchased.

Although S. 2828 and the companion bills deal primarily with conditions at reservoirs constructed by the Corps of Engineers, we see a far reaching effort on the part of the Administration to use the imposition of charges for entrance and admission to reservoirs or the imposition of charges or fees for mooring or docking facilities or other floating facilities as a step toward the imposition of tolls or user charges on our navigable waterways.

The construction of reservoirs by the Corps of Engineers admittedly sometimes serve single purposes such as flood control. In the majority, however, these are multiple-purpose projects that contribute to flood control, navigation, hydroelectric power, recreation, pollution abatement, water supply and many other benefits. They have been authorized on the basis of a favorable benefit to cost ratio wherein the benefits to be received from the project exceed the costs, and in so doing, contribute widely to the overall economy including the local, state, and Federal tax bases. Some may be considered to be regional in their scope, but by and large their benefits extend far beyond the region in which they are located. Examples are: the reservoirs on the Upper Missouri River that have in the past contributed to the elimination of the salt water intrusion problem in the extreme lower Mississippi River in the vicinity of New Orleans. Additionally, the reservoirs in the Tennessee Valley in addition to supplying electric power and navigation capability, because of their flexibility contributed to lowering flood heights on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

Earlier I mentioned that our membership extended into 36 states. I must add that more than 120 other associations, with memberships running into the millions are members of the Mississippi Valley Association. Hardly one of these states does not contain reservoirs that would be affected by the impositions that this legislation endeavors to prevent. Accordingly, we would be remiss in our responsibilities to our members in those states if we did not support this legislation. We are not now nor do we intend to be remiss in representing our membership. Did we not represent so broad a cross section of the country but rather reflected only our own views, we would have to support S. 2828 on the basis of preventing dual taxation and the breaking of faith with the American public.

We strongly urge and respectfully request the approval of this legislation by your Committee so that prompt action leading to the enactment of S. 2828 may be taken by the Congress.

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT L. SHORTLE, *Vice President.*