

Senator ANDERSON. Thank you very much, both of you for appearing.

Mr. Thompson, we are glad to have old friends back.

STATEMENT OF SAM THOMPSON, REPRESENTING INTERSTATE CONFERENCE ON WATER PROBLEMS, ACCOMPANIED BY CHARLES F. SCHWAN, JR.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Senator Anderson, it is good to be back about a subject that we both love and are very much interested in.

I have with me this morning Mr. Charles Schwan, a member of the Council of State Governments staff here in Washington.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, my name is Sam Thompson. I am a member of the Mississippi Board of Water Commissioners. I am appearing here today, however, on behalf of the Interstate Conference on Water Problems, of which I am a past chairman.

For the record, Mr. Chairman, the Interstate Conference on Water Problems consists of official representatives of State government who have special responsibilities for or interests in water problems. Participants include water resources administrators, attorneys general, legislators, and State representatives on interstate water resources agencies.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, a proud chapter in the history of the Interstate Conference on Water Problems was the part it played in developing what was enacted ultimately as Public Law 89-80, the Water Resources Planning Act. We had the privilege of participating with you and other members and staff of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in bringing about the enactment of what we regard as a piece of landmark legislation in water and related land resources conservation, development and utilization, and in Federal-State relations.

Our interest in this matter did not abate with the passage of Public Law 89-80. Indeed, to the extent it might have done so, the intent of the law would not have been fulfilled.

Taking up matters in reverse order, we understand that both for the current fiscal year and for the next, of 53 eligible jurisdictions, 51 have received or are applying for grants to assist them in developing comprehensive water resources plans under title III. This year requests exceeded appropriations. It is already evident that the same will be true for next year. We regard this grants-request relationship as evidence of at least two things. First, it is evident that title III was a wise enactment. Congress recognized a need for improving the State capability to plan for its water and land resources. Second, the States, similarly aware, have reacted enthusiastically and overwhelmingly to meet this need supported in part by Federal grants-in-aid.

The need for title II river basin commissions and the response of the States to the opportunity to participate with representatives of appropriate Federal agencies in basin-wide planning have been amply demonstrated, Mr. Chairman. There are now four active commissions, and, we understand that serious consideration is being given to the formation of five more.