

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM V. ROTH, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Mr. ROTH. Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee on Flood Control, I am happy to have the privilege of appearing before you to strongly urge the inclusion of the Delaware coast beach erosion control and hurricane protection project in the omnibus rivers and harbors and flood control bill this year.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot overstate the urgency and importance of this project to the State of Delaware. Over the last half century, the Delaware ocean coast extending from Cape Henlopen at the mouth of the Delaware Bay to Fenwick Island on the Maryland line has suffered the ravages of storm and tide to the extent that Rehoboth—the Nation's summer capital—has forfeited almost a city block along the ocean front to the sea. Some of the older structures along the shoreline have been moved inland several times, because of the sea's encroachment.

Delawareans vividly recall the destruction wrought by the March 1962 storm that caused loss of life and property damage in the millions on the Middle Atlantic coast. The tidal marshes on Delaware Bay were inundated, isolating a number of bayside communities for several days. Far worse damage was inflicted upon the ocean coast: houses were ripped from their foundations, resort hotels and motels were partially or totally destroyed, the dunes protecting areas beyond the beaches were flattened, the broad beaches were scoured clean of sand, leaving only the underlying clay, the narrow strip of land separating the ocean from the Rehoboth, Indian River, and Assawoman Bays was breached at many points.

Sussex County, Del., which includes all of the project area, is categorized as a depressed area under title IV of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965. Although the county is beginning to develop its industrial potential, poultry and tourism remain essential to the prosperity of its people.

Each summer, hundreds of thousands flock to the Delaware shore resorts from Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other major urban centers of the East. Indeed, so many Washington area residents weekend or vacation at Rehoboth Beach that it has earned the title, "the Nation's summer capital." I point this out to emphasize that the benefits from this project will flow to not only 535,000 Delawareans, but to the several million people living and working in the southern part of the great Northeastern megalopolis, as well.

Despite the fact that much of the damage of 6 years ago has been rebuilt, there remains the constant threat that future storms and hurricanes will do irreparable harm to these priceless natural resources that are our beaches. Only last August, the approach of a hurricane raised new fears for the beaches already weakened by the 1962 storm. Although emergency measures were taken by local and State authorities, we were fortunate that the hurricane veered out to sea before serious damage was suffered by coastal communities.

The cost of this project, slightly more than \$8 million, is low in comparison with the benefits to be derived from it. The benefit-cost ratios provided the subcommittee, reflect only partly the economic