

ing statutory requirements and give a preference to former owners at this project not afforded to former owners of similar Government projects.

Should the committee, nonetheless, favor this proposal, it is recommended that consideration be given to adoption of provisions similar to Public Law 85-245 (71 Stat. 563), approved August 31, 1957, relating to certain reservoirs in Mississippi.

(Statements follow:)

STATEMENT OF HON. OLIN E. TEAGUE (TEXAS) IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 13370

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I appreciate very much the opportunity to appear in support of my bill, H.R. 13370 authorizing the Secretary of Army to make certain adjustments in lands or interests therein acquired in connection with the Navarro Mills Reservoir, Texas.

When the Federal government working through the Real Estate Division of the Corps of Engineers began to acquire the land for the Navarro Mills Reservoir, it is my understanding that the policy in effect at that time relating to mineral rights was essentially that if the United States did not need to retain such rights they returned such rights to the owner of the land if he asked for its return. In other words, in acquiring the land, if the owner requested that the mineral rights be kept by him, and it did not interfere in the operation of the reservoir, the United States permitted the owner to retain these rights.

Because the great majority of the land owners in the Navarro Mills Reservoir area were elderly people in the sixties and seventies who had resided there for a great number of years; and who were small farmers, both negro and white with little formal education relinquished these rights along with the sale of their property. At a later date, a few of these people learned that exceptions had been made in behalf of some of the more affluent land owners.

I would like to submit to the Committee for its files a map of the area which sets forth the various tracts involved and designated indicating those tracts in which the minerals were originally reserved and those tracts in which the minerals were reverted at a later date. I would also like to include for the Committee files photostatic copies of affidavits taken from former owners who are now desirous of procuring the mineral rights as well as a complete listing which has already been furnished to the Secretary of Army of those people who desire return of such rights.

I am not aware of any report which the Committee may have received from the Department of Army and therefore I can give no estimate of cost should the bill be favorably considered. I do believe however that a moral obligation on the part of the United States towards a group of citizens is involved here and I would urge the Committee to seriously consider the bill in this light.

STATEMENT OF JOHN GOLDSUM, JUNE 20, 1968

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is John Goldsum, and I am a lawyer in Austin, Texas, with the firm of Clark, Thomas, Harris, Denius & Winters. We represent approximately 150 small landowners whose mineral rights were taken for construction of the Navarro Mills Reservoir, Texas. This statement is submitted in their behalf in support of H.R. 13370 by Congressman Olin E. Teague of Texas.

The people we represent feel very strongly that the Army Corps of Engineers unjustly discriminated against them in acquiring their mineral interests through condemnation and threats of condemnation while, unknown to them, permitting a favored few of their neighbors to retain their minerals. Among the latter were a retired Air Force General, an out-of-town bank, and several other more-influential and better-informed landowners.

Our clients include both Negroes and whites who have lived in Navarro and Hill counties, Texas, for most of their lives. Typically they are small farmers in their 60's and 70's with little or no formal education. The mineral rights taken from them underlie some 80 tracts of land ranging in size from 22.4 to 320 acres.