

On behalf of Mr. Sikes, I have a statement on one of his projects that I support. It is the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

(The statement of Hon. Robert L. F. Sikes follows:)

STATEMENT BY HON. ROBERT L. F. SIKES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity of appearing before this distinguished Committee today in support of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway—St. Marks to Tampa Bay. This project would provide for construction of about 250 miles of intracoastal waterway, 12 feet deep by 150 feet wide, from Tampa Bay to St. Marks River, Florida. An intracoastal waterway between St. Marks River and Tampa Bay is planned to be located generally along the Gulf shore from St. Marks River to the Anclote River and thence, along the existing Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to Tampa Bay.

The total estimated cost of the project is \$104,322,000. Of this amount, \$89,872,000 is federal cost and \$14,450,000 is non-federal participation.

This project will interconnect the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway from St. Marks to the Mexican border, with the section from Anclote River to the Caloosa-hatchee River, Florida. It will also provide a protected waterway, connecting the Cross-Florida Barge Canal with the Gulf and midcontinental system of waterways and the Atlantic seaboard system. In addition to providing major transportation savings through barge distribution of freight from deep water ports at Tampa, St. Petersburg, Pensacola, and Panama City, construction of the St. Marks to Tampa waterway will open a large part of the remaining undeveloped coastline of Florida for recreational development and would preserve these natural resources for public use. Completion of the waterway, coupled with completion of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, will provide a connected intercoastal waterway system of over 2500 miles, reaching from Trenton, New Jersey to the Mexican border and tying in to the Mississippi River system of channels, including the Tennessee, Ohio, and Missouri River systems and on to the Great Lakes via the Illinois waterway.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge that this Committee give favorable consideration to this most outstanding project which has such far-reaching benefits.

Mr. FASCELL. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Gibbons has a statement.

Mr. BLATNIK. Proceed, Mr. Gibbons.

STATEMENT OF HON. SAM GIBBONS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. GIBBONS. I will merely put my statement into the record at this point.

(The full prepared statement of Mr. Gibbons follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. SAM GIBBONS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. Chairman, for the past five years the question of the feasibility of constructing a 250 mile coastal waterway from St. Marks, Florida, to Tampa, Florida, has been studied by the Army Corps of Engineers. The purpose of this construction project is to connect the inland waterways of the Atlantic seaboard with those of the Gulf of Mexico and the mid-continental United States. Completion of the waterway, coupled with completion of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, will provide a connected intercoastal waterway tying in to the Mississippi River system of channels including the Tennessee, Ohio, and Missouri River system and the Great Lakes via the Illinois waterway system. As you can see, this project will benefit a large segment of our population.

On June 10, 1968, the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors recommended construction of a 12 feet deep and 150 feet wide channel to close the final gap in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway system. I think it is important to emphasize that the area under consideration represents the only missing link in a sheltered coastal waterway extending from a point north of Boston, Massachusetts to the Mexican border.