

Significantly, the loss to California alone is of some 255,800 acres or 67 percent of the total estuarine areas of that State.

Now, estuarine areas are enormously productive and valuable. Two out of three species of useful Atlantic fish depend in some way upon tidal lands and canals as a base for their survival. Even oceanic fish often have complex life cycles which bring them into their coastal bays and lagoons and tidal rivers at tiny, young stages of their lives.

Ninety percent of salt water fish were taken in shallow, coastal waters; nearly 70 percent of the most valuable Atlantic coast species of fish are directly dependent in some stage of life on the estuaries.

Now, to conclude:

What has all this to do with those 7 or 8 or 9 acres of mudflat at the mouth of Hunting Creek? This bed of stream and tidal estuary has been almost totally destroyed already. Why not complete the job by granting the subject permit? Then the next one on to the north, then Jones Point. Jones Point will be just about worthless as a piece of green shoreline for the public. So turn that over for development.

Then, there is Dyke Marsh to the south, and another 100 miles of estuary down the Potomac.

The point is that Virginia's estuarine areas, the 67 percent of California, the 50 percent of Long Island's south shore, have been lost and they have been lost by attrition, small piece by small piece.

Is that what we want for the Potomac?

I say, not.

And if that is the wish of the people, we are precisely at the point now where we should say, no.

This small area could be restored from the damage of the past few years.

Jones Point in its immediate environs could be developed as an essential amenity in the conglomerate of high-rise, highways, and other urban development.

I believe the testimony of the applicant this afternoon points out that this should be done and can be done, but I cannot see that they demonstrate that a bulkhead and fill project for an apartment complex is necessary to that objective.

We are today, with respect to the estuaries of the Nation, just about where we were in the days of Gifford Pinchot with respect to the forests of the Nation. We must have the courage to act to save our estuarine resources rather than to rationalize them away as an earlier generation had to do to save our forest lands.

We hope the decision on this application will be, no.

Colonel RHEA. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Jackson M. Abbott, representing the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia and the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

STATEMENT OF JACKSON MILES ABBOTT, REPRESENTING AUDUBON SOCIETY OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. ABBOTT. Colonel Rhea and ladies and gentlemen, my name is Jackson Abbott. I live at 8501 Doter Drive, Waynewood, which is a suburb of Alexandria.

I represent the Audubon Naturalists Society of the District of Columbia and the Central Atlantic States and the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

I have made for the past 22 years field trips for Boy Scouts and schools and nature groups in the Hunting Creek area, the Dyke Marsh area, and Jones Point area and have averaged about 2 hours a week year around for the past 22 years of personal investigation in this region, and I can say from my own personal experience that despite the filled-in condition of upper Hunting Creek, the Hunting Creek Bay region remains the only area south of Washington, D.C., where there is a tremendous variety of waterfowl, shore birds, gulls, and terns, and other wildlife, which to many people such as developers and so on appear to be trash species.

I would refute the statement made earlier that marshland is trashland.

In fact, marshland is one of our most valuable assets from a conservation viewpoint. The fact that Hunting Creek Bay area is being filled up with mud and silt is the beginning of a marshland if left alone. Pollution can be cleaned up. That area could eventually become a marsh.

From a conservation viewpoint, this would be a tremendous switch over what we have been doing in the past years and we humans have filled up every marsh we can find. We call it wet lands and wastelands. Yet, those of us who know something about the conservation aspects of the ecological niches in which various