

1958

Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill" (1958). *Mike Mansfield Speeches*. 260. https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/260

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EXCERPTS FROM:

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D. MONTANA)
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL 1958

Mr. Chairman, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I come before your Subcommittee in behalf of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill which is so vital to the State of Montana.

This appropriations bill is probably one of the most important to my constituents because it contains funds for the Bureau of Land Management, Minerals Program, Indian education and welfare, National Park Service, Fish & Wildlife and the Forest Service. Because of the vast wealth of natural resources, the varied topography of the State in addition to a sparse population the programs of this Department and these Agencies have great bearing on the economic welfare and development of the State.

This morning I would like to discuss several appropriation items and then have the remainder of my remarks inserted in the printed record of this hearing.

Benton Lake Wildlife Refuge

I am taking this opportunity to make an appeal for funds in behalf of funds for what can easily be the most productive and useful units in the entire National Wildlife Refuge Program. I speak of the Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Montana. At the present time the lake receives water naturally at extremely rare intervals and under these conditions the refuge has already proven itself a record-breaking duck producing area.

The refuge is already set up but the lake is filled only one year in every twenty. Planning for the orderly development and full utilization of the Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge is now complete for providing an adequate water supply.

I want to stress the importance of this project and ask that \$90,000 be included in the appropriations for the Fish & Wildlife Service. These funds would provide for the start of engineering and construction in fiscal year 1958.

As you know these funds were not included in the budget requests now being considered by the Committee. I am advised that the Interior Department did not include this sum in their budget because at the time the budget was submitted to Congress clearing of easements and rights-of-way had not been completed. However, by letter of March 13, 1957, the Fish and Wildlife Service advised Congressman LeRoy Anderson that the review of the land and water records indicated that all legal obstacles had been cleared that they could go ahead with the project as rapidly as funds permit.

Enabling legislation authorizing acquisition of right-of way needed to deliver water from the works of the Greenfield Irrigation District already has been enacted by the Montana Legislature.