

August 13, 1937

[Message to Congress - Veto - Flood Control]

FDR Speech File

RECORDS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE  
RECORD GROUP 66

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF AUGUST 13, 1937  
RELATING TO  
VETOING S. J. RES. 57

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, 1955

Aug 13, 1937.

*Printed*

TO THE SENATE:

I return herewith without my approval, Senate Joint Resolution No. 57, entitled "Joint Resolution to authorize the submission to Congress of a comprehensive national plan for the prevention and control of floods of all the major rivers of the United States, development of hydroelectric power resources, water and soil conservation, and for other purposes."

In my message of June 3, 1937, I proposed for the consideration of Congress, a thoroughly democratic process of national planning of the conservation and utilization of the water, and related land, resources of our country. I expressed the belief that such a process of national planning should start at the bottom through the initiation of planning work in the State and local units, and that it should contemplate the formulation of programs on a regional basis, the integration of fiscal and conservation policies on a national basis, and the submission of a comprehensive development program to the Congress by the President.

The reverse of such a process of national planning is prescribed in Senate Joint Resolution No. 57. By this resolution the War Department would become the national planning agency, not alone for flood control, but for all the other multiple uses of water. Although the Department of Agriculture would prepare reports on run-off retardation and soil erosion prevention, and the Department of the Interior be consulted on reclamation projects, the War Department would report for these

coordinate agencies directly to Congress instead of to the Chief Executive. The local and regional basis of planning would be ignored, and there would be no review of the whole program, prior to its presentation to Congress, from the standpoint of national budgetary considerations and national conservation policies.

The Corps of Army Engineers has had wide experience in the building of flood control projects and has executed the projects entrusted to it with great skill and ability. Its experience and background is not alone sufficient, however, for the planning of a comprehensive program for the development of the vast water and related resources of the Nation.

The planning of the use and control of water and related resources is distributed by law among numerous governmental agencies, such as the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, the Federal Power Commission, the United States Public Health Service, the International Boundary Commission, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Joint Resolution encroaches upon the functions of these agencies, and ignores and duplicates the coordinated planning work already in progress under the general guidance of the National Resources Committee.

I find it impossible to subscribe, therefore, to the proposal that has been embodied in this Joint Resolution.

This does not mean, however, that the objective of this Joint Resolution can be attained without the need of any

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legislation whatsoever. I propose to present to the Congress in January a comprehensive national plan for flood control and prevention and the development of water and soil conservation, such plan to be prepared by all of the many Government agencies concerned.

I trust that this will meet all of the desires of the Congress.



The White House,

August 15, 1927.