

Seeds of Hope Act, the United States remains ready to do its share. November 13, 1998.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON
The White House,

NOTE: H.R. 4283, approved November 13, was assigned Public Law No. 105-385.

Statement on Signing the Centennial of Flight Commemoration Act *November 13, 1998*

Today I have signed into law S. 1397, the “Centennial of Flight Commemoration Act.”

On December 17, 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright completed the first successful manned flight of a heavier-than-air machine. This historic moment marked the first step in a long journey through the skies that would ultimately take Americans beyond Earth’s atmosphere and into space. This Act establishes a commission to coordinate the commemoration of this achievement, the benefits of which we are continuing to reap.

I am advised by the Department of Justice that section 9 of S. 1397, which authorizes the commission to devise a logo and regulate and license its use, is inconsistent with the Appointments Clause of the Constitution and that, accordingly, these functions may not be performed by the commission as it is currently organized. Similarly, although section 5(a)(3) directs the

commission to “plan and develop” its own commemorative activities, the commission may not itself implement such activities because of Appointments Clause concerns. Finally, I also understand that the statute poses potential conflicts of interest problems. In contracting and in selecting an executive staff director and staff members (who will be considered Federal employees), the commission will need to take appropriate actions to avoid such conflicts. My Administration will work closely with the Congress to address these issues in future legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 13, 1998.

NOTE: S. 1397, approved November 13, was assigned Public Law No. 105-389.

Statement on Signing the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998

November 13, 1998

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 1693, the “National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998.”

The Act, which passed with bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress, is a major victory for all Americans who treasure and want to preserve the cultural and natural resources our parks have to offer. The Act contains a number of measures to assist National Park Service operations. This legislation is the first major overhaul of the way that the National Park Service awards concessions contracts in more than 3 decades. It ensures that all major contracts will be award-

ed through competitive bidding and makes concessions franchise fees available directly to the Park Service to improve the parks. These changes will result in better service to visitors and a better return to the taxpayers.

The Act requires the development of a training program that will allow Park Service employees the opportunity to gain the skills and experience they will need to protect parks. It also allows the Secretary of the Interior to lease park buildings consistent with other park legislation, and it lays out a clear process for the Park

Service to recommend areas to be studied for possible inclusion into the National Park System.

Finally, the Act establishes a park “passport,” which includes a collectible stamp that provides an innovative way for the public to directly support parks. My Administration will work to minimize any confusion that may result between the introduction of this new parks-only passport and the continued use of the Golden Eagle Passport, which provides access to all public lands.

I commend retiring Senator Dale Bumpers, Senator Craig Thomas, and Representatives Don Young and George Miller for their outstanding work in forging a consensus to bring about the passage of S. 1693.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 13, 1998.

NOTE: S. 1693, approved November 13, was assigned Public Law No. 105–391.

Statement on Signing the Economic Development Administration and Appalachian Regional Development Reform Act of 1998 *November 13, 1998*

Today I have signed into law S. 2364, the “Economic Development Administration and Appalachian Regional Development Reform Act of 1998.” This legislation reauthorizes the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), which provide grant assistance to help rural and urban distressed areas create economic opportunity and job growth in their communities.

The EDA, a reinvented agency within the Department of Commerce, promotes economic development in distressed communities—communities with unemployment above the national average, low income, or special needs created by events such as natural disasters, military base closures, or defense industry downsizing. Title I of the Act reauthorizes the EDA and tightens eligibility criteria to ensure that the EDA can better serve the needs of distressed communities, simplifies application procedures, and streamlines statutory authorities by eliminating obsolete programs.

Title II of the Act reauthorizes the ARC. Established by the Congress in 1965, the ARC is a Federal-State partnership providing social and economic support for a 13-State region stretching from southern New York to northern

Mississippi. The ARC targets its resources to the region’s most distressed areas. Since the mid-1960s, the region’s poverty rate has been cut in half; the percentage of adults with a high school education has doubled; and the infant mortality rate has been cut by two-thirds.

This Act recognizes that future growth requires improved physical infrastructure, a skilled workforce, an emphasis on creating entrepreneurial communities, the deployment of new technologies for business development, and a concerted effort to make the Nation more competitive in international markets. This legislation also maintains the critical role of local development districts in economic growth.

Reauthorization of the EDA and the ARC represents an important step in my Administration’s efforts to ensure that all parts of America participate in the economic growth that this country has enjoyed over the past 6 years.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 13, 1998.

NOTE: S. 2364, approved November 13, was assigned Public Law No. 105–393.