

Statement on the Termination of Deportation Proceedings in Support of the Northern Ireland Peace Process *December 11, 2000*

I strongly support the Attorney General's decision, at the request of the Secretary of State, to take action to terminate deportation proceedings against six individuals and to refrain from initiating proceedings against three others. All nine individuals had served sentences in the United Kingdom for activity connected with the IRA but are physically present in the United States. While in no way approving or condoning their past criminal acts, I believe that removing the threat of deportation for these individuals

will contribute to the peace process in Northern Ireland. The Attorney General's decision is consistent with steps taken by the British Government under the Good Friday accord to release prisoners in Northern Ireland and reintegrate them into normal society as part of a process of reconciliation. Her decision will also reinforce efforts by the Governments and the parties in Northern Ireland to implement in full all aspects of the Good Friday accord.

Statement on Signing the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 *December 11, 2000*

Today I have signed into law S. 2796, the "Water Resources Development Act of 2000," a multibillion dollar omnibus bill to authorize water projects and programs of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

I am very pleased that this bill authorizes the Administration's plan to restore an unprecedented natural resource—America's Everglades. Thanks to an historic partnership among Federal, State, tribal, and local leaders, we can begin in earnest an over 30-year journey to complete the largest and most ambitious ecosystem restoration project in the world.

Since the beginning of our first term, the Vice President and I have made Everglades restoration a priority. We have provided the necessary resources to Federal agencies and made timely completion of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan an essential part of our environmental agenda. Through the leadership of the Army Corps of Engineers and the support of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior, and other Federal agencies, the State of Florida, and a diverse group of stakeholders, the authorized plan provides a scientifically sound blueprint to guide Everglades restoration. The legislation provides assurances that water developed under the Plan will be available for the restoration of the natural systems. We must all now make implemen-

tation of this Plan a priority if we are to save this threatened resource and leave an Everglades legacy that will make future generations proud of their Government. By acting now, we can reverse the damage of the past and rescue this unique and remarkable landscape.

I am pleased that S. 2796 also authorizes a major project to deepen channels into New York/New Jersey harbor, our Nation's third largest container port, that will benefit consumers and producers, create jobs, and make the United States more competitive in world markets. The Act also authorizes my proposal for projects to improve the Puget Sound ecosystem and authorizes efforts to restore the estuary of the lower Columbia River, boosting the recovery of threatened and endangered salmon species in the Pacific Northwest.

In addition, I am pleased that the Congress has adopted my proposals to strengthen the authority of the Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate comprehensively the water resources needs of watersheds throughout the Nation and to enhance its ability to work with Native American tribes and Alaska native communities to study proposed water resources projects. I also endorse the authorization for a National Academy of Sciences study on suggestions for an independent review of Army Corps of Engineers projects.