84TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
2d Session } { No. 2470

ELIMINATE DELAY IN WATERSHED PROJECTS

JUNE 26, 1956.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. COOLEY, from the Committee on Agriculture, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 11873]

The Committee on Agriculture, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 11873) to amend the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act so as to eliminate delay in the start of projects, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

Section 5 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act requires that after projects have been worked out with local groups, approved by the Secretary of Agriculture, and reviewed and approved by the Bureau of the Budget, they shall be submitted to Congress through the President and that no work on such projects may start for at least 45 days after the date of submission, counting only those days occurring during any regular or special session of Congress.

The intended purpose of this interval was to give the Houses of Congress and individual Members thereof an opportunity to review the projects before work on them was undertaken in order that proper action might be inaugurated in the event Congress disapproved of any specific projects.

The act went into effect on August 4, 1954 and the first projects thereunder were submitted to Congress on April 20 of this year. Since that time, additional projects have been set up by the Bureau of the Budget, including a group of eight such projects on June 8, 1956.

Experience with the handling of the projects thus far submitted indicates quite clearly that the interval of 45 days provided in the act for congressional review is unnecessarily long. Not only does this requirement normally hold up the start of projects longer than necessary, but because of the provision that only days during a session of Congress are to be counted, may delay the start of such a project unnecessarily from one session of Congress to another.

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This bill will shorten the review period from 45 days to 15 days and thus eliminate a substantial delay, while still maintaining the principle of and opportunity for congressional review of each individual project.

DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL

The following letter from the Department of Agriculture indicates no objection on the part of that Department or the Bureau of the Budget to the bill.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D. C., June 22, 1956.

Hon. HAROLD D. COOLEY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
United States House of Representatives.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COOLEY: This is in reply to your request for a report by this Department on H. R. 11873 a bill to amend the Water shed Protection and Flood Prevention Act so as to eliminate delay in the start of projects.

The Department has no objection to enactment of the bill. However, the period for congressional consideration of work plans transmitted to it is, in our view, a matter for the Congress to decide.

The bill would shorten from 45 to 15 days the period which must elapse after work plans are received by the Congress before installations of works of improvement on the projects can be commenced with Federal assistance.

This would make it possible to start work on projects 30 days sooner than under present provisions. It would help assure the initiation of work this summer on several projects for which work plans are now before the Congress and on which work cannot be started until next year if the Congress adjourns less than 45 days after they were received by the Congress.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report.

Sincerely yours,

TRUE D. MORSE, *Acting Secretary.*

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with clause 3 of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION ACT

(68 Stat. 666)

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SEC. 5. At such time as the Secretary and the interested local organization have agreed on a plan for works of improvement, and the Secretary has determined that the benefits exceed the costs, and the local organization has met the requirements for participation in carrying out the works of improvement as set forth in section 4, the

Secretary is authorized to assist such local organizations in developing specifications, in preparing contracts for construction, and to participate in the installation of such works of improvement in accordance with the plan: *Provided*, That, except as to the installation of works of improvement on Federal lands, the Secretary shall not construct or enter into any contract for the construction of any structure unless there is no local organization authorized by State law to undertake such construction or to enter into such contract, and in no event after July 1, 1956: *Provided*, That in participating in the installaton of such works of improvement the Secretary, as far as practicable and consistent with his responsibilities for administering the overall national agricultural program, shall utilize the authority conferred upon him by the provisions of this Act: *Provided further*, That, at least [forty-five] *fifteen* days (counting only days occurring during any regular or special sessions of the Congress) before such installation involving Federal assistance is commenced, the Secretary shall transmit a copy of the plan and the justification therefor to the Congress through the President: *Provided further*, That any such plan (a) which includes reclamation or irrigation works or which affects public or other lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior, or (b) which includes Federal assistance for floodwater detention structures, shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of the Army, respectively, for his views and recommendations at least sixty days prior to transmission of the plan to the Congress through the President. The views and recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of the Army, if received by the Secretary of Agriculture prior to the expiration of the above sixty-day period, shall accompany the plan transmitted by the Secretary of Agriculture to the Congress through the President: *Provided further*, That, prior to any Federal participation in the works of improvement under this Act, the President shall issue such rules and regulations as he deems necessary or desirable to carry out the purposes of this Act, and to assure the coordination of the work authorized under this Act, and related work of other agencies including the Department of the Interior and the Department of the Army.

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