

Foreword

Few laws have had such an impact on the United States Army Corps of Engineers as the 1936 Flood Control Act. For over 50 years before passage of this act, Congress had been periodically charging the Corps with flood control responsibilities. However, lawmakers generally justified the work on the basis of aiding navigation. It was only in the 1936 act that Congress stipulated that flood control was an appropriate federal activity. The act authorized hundreds of flood control projects and established policies that endure to this day. Moreover, it dramatically increased the Corps' work load, forcing the agency to develop new procedures and offices.

I take particular interest in the 1936 Flood Control Act since its lineal descendant is the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-662). In 1936, lawmakers decided that local interests ought to share in the costs of flood control measures. At that depression-ridden time, the decision resulted in relatively modest local contributions for channel and levee projects but left flood control storage in reservoir projects as a 100 percent federal responsibility.

In the years since passage of the 1936 landmark legislation, increasing pressures developed for greater nonfederal contributions in all types of water resources development projects. With the increased environmental awareness of the 1960s and 1970s, arguments for additional nonfederal contributions to enhance economic efficiency were bolstered by demands to reduce the number of water projects with adverse environmental impacts. The executive and legislative branches reached an impasse. Until 1986, no significant new project authorizations had been made since the mid-1970s. Consequently, a backlog of problems created by flooding, drought, and other water-related activities developed.

Over the past several years we, along with other administration representatives and a bipartisan coalition of congressmen and senators, have made a concerted effort to resolve the impasse. To the credit of both those beneficiaries of water projects who agreed to a greater local contribution than in the

past and those who desired 100 percent reimbursement of federal costs, acceptable compromises were made.

I am proud to say that our efforts were concluded with passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. I want to thank the congressmen and senators, especially Congressman Robert Roe and former Senator James Abdnor, who helped us achieve our goal. The 262 water projects it authorizes, at a total cost of \$16 billion, will allow us to continue the work set in motion by the 1936 Flood Control Act. We look forward to working with local interests and other agencies of government to promote the safety and welfare of citizens in flood-prone areas of our country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert W. Page', with a large, stylized initial 'R' and 'P'.

ROBERT W. PAGE

Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)