



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

October 30, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Dennis K. Rathbun, Director
Office of Congressional Affairs *DR*

SUBJECT: ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS

On October 7, 2000, President Clinton vetoed H.R. 4733, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations for FY 2001, primarily because of his objections to a provision that would have prevented the Army Corps of Engineers from revising its water management plan for the Missouri River. That provision was deleted and the Energy and Water bill was incorporated into H.R. 4635, the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations for FY 2001. On October 27, 2000, the President signed H.R. 4635 into law.

The President referred to H.R. 4635 during his remarks on the budget (attached) on October 28.

Attachment:
As Stated

cc: EDO
OGC/Cyr
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SECY
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NMSS
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OIP
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OCAA

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 28, 2000

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON THE BUDGET

The James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

2:17 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

Q Got it right.

THE PRESIDENT: I got it right. I'm making progress.
(Laughter.)

As I said yesterday, when this Congress has acted in a spirit of genuine bipartisanship, we have made profound progress. Yesterday I signed the VA-HUD bill that invests in the health of veterans, advances welfare reform with 75,000 housing vouchers, strengthens AmeriCorps, and invests cutting-edge scientific research with the largest increase ever in the National Science Foundation.

Earlier this month I signed an Interior bill that creates the largest appropriation for lands preservation in our nation's history. I also look forward to signing the bipartisan foreign operations bill, which will fund our debt relief initiative for the poorest countries in the world.

And just a few moments ago, I signed a vitally important and bipartisan Agriculture appropriations bill. This legislation will fund our nation's agriculture programs for the coming year and provided much need help to our farmers, our ranchers, our rural communities, who have suffered everything from devastating droughts to low commodity prices.

It also contains the largest increase ever in development funding for rural and Native American communities that have not shared in our nation's prosperity. It will help to create new businesses and expand current ones in small towns and rural areas. It will help rural communities attract new residents, and with funding for new health clinics and improved water systems, it will improve the quality of life all across rural America.

The bill also will help us provide humanitarian relief and development loans to countries that need help, and promote the sale of United States goods abroad. The bill modernizes our food inspection system with increased surveillance and more food inspectors.

Finally, this bill includes common-sense reforms that will let food stamp recipients own a dependable car and have decent housing. If we want people to go to work, they have to be able to get to work. They shouldn't have to choose between a car they need to get to their jobs and the nutrition and shelter they need for their children.

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This is a good bill for America. It helps hard-hit farmers, ranchers and rural communities, improves the safety of our food, and take the next steps in welfare reform. Of course, there are also things in the bill I don't like. It says it allows the importation of lower-cost prescription drugs from other countries, but leaves the power of deciding whether or not to import these drugs to the drug companies, meaning it will do nothing for seniors and others struggling to pay high prescription drug bills.

It purports to allow the export of American products to Cuba, yet it makes it virtually impossible for family farmers to arrange the financing that enables such sales to take place. Moreover, the legislation is designed to impose new restriction on our efforts to foster people-to-people contacts and bring reform in Cuba.

It also includes objectionable trade provisions and doesn't restore food stamps for legal immigrants. And it contains fewer resources than I requested for clean water for farms and for climate change.

Nonetheless, I decided that on balance this bill advances the interests of the American people. That's why I signed it, and that's how progress is made, when we work together and have honorable compromise. No one gets everything he or she wants.

I still have the feeling the congressional majority has not yet decided whether they want to work with us in this way on the remaining bills, or just score points and leave town. On Medicare, we sent the majority a very detailed proposal. We said when it comes to more resources, the priority should not be HMOs, but teaching hospitals, rural hospitals, home health agencies, children with disabilities, and pregnant women and children who are legal immigrants. The congressional leadership so far has virtually ignored that proposal.

The story is the same on taxes. We put forward a good-faith compromise, and then offered to work to craft a bipartisan tax bill that meets the test of fairness to children, to seniors, to millions of Americans without health coverage, and to small business. The answer we got was disappointing -- instead of meeting with us, instead of working with the White House and-or congressional Democrats, the Republican leadership instead crafted their own partisan tax package and passed it on largely a party-line vote.

Again I'm asking the congressional leaders to instruct their tax negotiators to meet with ours tomorrow, so we can find common ground on tax relief for America's families. We don't yet know how the education and health bill will work out. I hope the majority doesn't choose the path they took on the tax bill, or the Commerce-State-Justice bill, for that matter. Instead we should do what was done on the Agriculture bill I signed today; on the VA-HUD bill; on the Interior bill -- the bipartisan path that invariably leads us to progress.

We said very specifically what our schools need -- smaller class sizes and modern classrooms, investments in accountability, turning around failing schools, and teacher quality. There's no secret about what the right course is. Our priorities are clear and we're ready to work with them in good faith, just as we have on all other bills.

Again this morning, Congress voted for a stopgap spending bill for today, and quickly left town for the weekend. That's like going to work in the morning, punching the clock and going back home. Our budget team is working all weekend, ready to meet. We need to come together on budget, meet on Medicare, work out a fair tax cut bill, raise the minimum wage, and pass the New Markets legislation.

Tonight we turn back the clocks and we gain an hour. We ought

put that extra hour to good use. We're here; we're ready; and we need to finish the job.

Thank you.

Q Mr. President, does it bother you that your insistence on just single-day extensions of the emergency spending bill has provoked considerable anger and irritation on the Capitol? Trent Lott says it's humiliating. Arlen Specter said you're intimidating Congress -- I'm sorry Trent Lott said it was harassment. Does that bother you? Do you think this works against you?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hope not. I'm not trying to harass them. I'm just trying to get them finished and get out of town. They want to go home and campaign and they have a right to -- they need to campaign, but they need to finish their jobs.

And I think it's highly -- it's frustrating for Senator Lott because the real problem here is that the right wing of the Republican Caucus in the Senate so far has not permitted the Republicans to meet with the Democrats and work out a compromise on these last bills, as we have on all the others.

Now, we're working together on the Labor-HHS bill, which is the education bill and human services bill. But on the tax bill and on the appropriation for Commerce-State-Justice, they haven't permitted him to work with us. And he's in a very difficult position. I'm very sympathetic with him. I'm not trying to harass them. But if we kept passing these four and five-day continuing resolutions, we'll just never get our work done. And they are coming back tomorrow night. Last week they came back on Monday night. So if we could make an agreement tomorrow night, they could be out of here by Monday, and that would give them -- they could go home eight days and take their case to the American people. That's all I am trying to do.

Q Mr. President, after you spoke out yesterday, the House Speaker said he believed you were being forced by House Democrats to veto the tax cut bill and to keep lawmakers in session in order to, A, prevent Republicans from getting a victory before election day, and also to force some confrontation for election-year gain. What do you say to the Speaker?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's not true. I mean, look at what -- mean, I have -- for three days in a row now I have lavished praise on the Republicans, as well as the Democrats, where we have worked together. And in each case I've told you the things that I didn't agree with that they wanted in the bills that we accepted. So we're not trying to force a confrontation.

I will say again, look at the facts here. We haven't finished the education bill because we are still arguing over one issue, but I have not criticized them. We're working in good faith to try to work through this.

There are two pieces of legislation, and two only, in this entire Congress that they basically have refused to meet with us on. They said, we heard you, and here's the best we can do, take it or leave it. And they're in that position because of the power of the right wing of their Caucus in the Senate and the House. And I understand, it's a very difficult thing for them. I am not trying to provoke a confrontation here. But these are the only -- I will say again, the facts are clear. These are the only two bills on which we have not had a bipartisan negotiation.

All we're asking for is to do these bills the way we did the others. They'll get some of what they want, we'll get some of what we want. We'll have an agreement. It will be, on balance, good for the American people. I will say that. Then they can go home and make their

case about what else they want to do; the Democrats can go home and make their case about what else we would like to do.

All I'm trying to do is get the job done here, and all I'm asking for is we treat these bills the same way we treated every other one.

Q Mr. President, is it your position that you'll sign one-day CRs until you get a Labor-HHS bill, or that you'll only sign one-day CRs until you get a Labor-HHS bill, a tax proposal and a Medicare --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, we've got to finish the education bill. But what I would -- my preference, my strong preference to finish it all. Let me just go back to -- your question is tied to the previous one. It is not true that I do not want a tax bill before the election. That is not true. I believe we should give some tax relief. I am more than willing to do it, but I cannot in good conscience do something that I think is unfair and that will aggravate some of the problems that purports to solve.

All I'm asking for here is what I have done every single year I've been here. I just want -- if you go back, ever since we've had divided government, whenever we have negotiated, we have reached agreement we've done things that have been good for America, starting with the welfare reform bill in '96; we had the Balanced Budget Act in '97; we had the Telecommunications Act, which has been an incredible boon to our economy; and many, many other things.

And this year, because we've been fiscally prudent and we've got some funds to invest in America's future, we have made some truly astonishing steps forward for our country. All I am asking for is the same method of working out the bill on the last two remaining bills that we go on the other bills, and a good-faith conclusion to the work we're doing on the education bill. That's all I'm asking for.

Q Mr. President, one question about the campaign, if I might. There are reports today that Vice President Gore has communicated to you that he would like you to steer clear of the battleground states of Pennsylvania and Michigan. Is that true? And do you think you'd be a political liability, or does he think that, if you went there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I said yesterday, generally -- remember what I said yesterday? Let me just go back through this. I think, in general, these elections are always decided by the candidates and the case they make to the people. I actually, as I said, I may be the only person that's involved in this debate who has experienced this situation in reverse -- when President Reagan was immensely popular, and came to Arkansas in '84 to campaign. And when the votes were counted, he had 62 percent and I think I had 63.

So what a President who is not running -- there are only two things a President who is not running can do. You can tell people what you think the condition of the country is and what the stakes are, and you can try to rally the people that are already with you in the hope of getting a bigger turnout. The undecided voters will be swayed primarily by the others.

And what I have to hope is that wherever I go, that what I have to say is more important than just the fact of my being there. Because you're going to decide who you want to be the next President, Mark is going to decide, all of you are going to decide, and very few third parties can change your mind. So that's not what is at issue here. The most important actors in this drama are Al Gore and Governor Bush. They're the only actors in the drama that really have any sway here -- except for Senator Lieberman and Congressman Cheney; I think they can have some impact.

And the rest of us might be able to sway some undecided voters our arguments are heard -- and I have an understanding of this that's unique because I've been President the last eight years. I may -- we haven't decided everywhere I'm going yet, and I may still go to Michigan. If they want me to come and the campaign thinks it will be helpful, I'll go. But what I have to do is what I think will be most helpful. The President, if your arguments are heard and people listen to them, you may sway a few undecided voters. But the fact of your going is not a vote getter ever. That wasn't for any previous President. It wasn't for President Reagan. But it does help if you can turn out your votes.

So we're looking at all the best ways we have to try to make sure all the people who are for our side and agree with us actually show up. That's very important. The Republicans are doing the same thing. And we'll just see what happens. I'll do whatever I think is best, in consultation with the campaign. But I don't think the final travel schedule has been set yet, and I think we just have to wait and see how things unfold the next few days.

Also, as I said yesterday, I have to finish this work here. And as you know, we're watching events in the Middle East very closely. So if I can be helpful, I will. I've already done a lot the last year and I've done a lot in the last few days. I will continue to do what I can. But the first priority for me has to be here, and the election will be determined by, I believe, the case made by the two candidates for President in the next few days. And I think the rest of us, all we can do is hope to sway a few undecided voters if they hear us, and get the folks out that are already for us.

Thank you.

END 2:32 P.M. EDT

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