

STATEMENT OF REP. GERALD R. FORD

TO:
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FLOOD CONTROL-RIVERS AND HARBORS
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS , U. S. Senate
July 28, 1958



Mr. Chairman:

When the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2 on May 22, 1957, I spoke in opposition to the bill and voted against it. Nothing has happened subsequently to change my position on the proposal to divert additional water from Lake Michigan.

The western edge of my Congressional District in western Michigan borders on Lake Michigan and our people are always concerned with the water level of the Great Lakes. The Lake is important to us as a source of water for our municipal water systems. It is important to us in navigation and transportation.

With the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, it is essential that a Great Lakes water level be maintained that will enable sea-going vessels to readily enter and leave all our Great Lake harbors.

To further lower the Lake level will add greatly to the cost of maintaining the harbor facilities and channels at our Lake ports.

The Lake level at the mouth of the Grand River at Grand Haven, Michigan in my District on July 1, 1954 was 580.9 feet. On July 1, 1958, it was 577.9 feet, a drop of three feet in four years. This fact is most significant and ought to be most seriously considered before the Congress authorizes an additional diversion of water to the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago.

May I include at this point in my remarks, a letter of July 24, 1958 addressed to this subcommittee by the Board of Directors of the Greater Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce. I endorse the position taken by the Board of Directors and urge this Sub-Committee to take no further action on H.R. 2 and S. 1123 or to



recommend that no further action be taken by the Senate Committee on Public Works. The letter follows:

The Greater Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce opposes passage of H.R. 2 and S. 1123 for diversion of water from Lake Michigan for the following reasons:

The Lake level at the mouth of Grand River at Grand Haven, Michigan, on July 1, 1954 was 580.9 feet. In 1955, it was 580.4; in 1956, 579.2; in 1957, 578.7; and on July 1, 1958, it was 577.9 feet, a drop of three feet in four years.

This drop in the Lake Michigan level was resulted in a lowering of 1 million gallons per day in the pumping capacity of the Grand Rapids Municipal Water Service, with intake in Lake Michigan a few miles south of Grand Haven.

Any further diversion of water from Lake Michigan would result in further lowering of the Lake level and further decreasing proportionately of the water pumping capacity for the City of Grand Rapids,

At the present time, the City of Grand Rapids must order reduction in use of water on a number of days in the summer season because of lack of capacity.

Ships arriving at West Michigan ports which serve Grand Rapids industries and agriculture are presently required to limit their capacities because of the low water level.

Any further diversion of water from Lake Michigan would nullify the expenditure by the United States for the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The City of Chicago has alternative methods to handle its own problem.

Therefore, the Greater Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, representing business and industry and the general public in this metropolitan area, respectfully requests the defeat of the Bills, H.R. 2 and S. 1123.