

I am honored that Chairman Oberstar and Congressman Duncan are cosponsors of this legislation. And I was privileged to work on the Water Resources Subcommittee for those 6 years that Congressman Duncan chaired it, and it was a valuable and productive time. It was an opportunity for me to learn about this critical area.

And the reason we are introducing this resolution today is because of the history that was recounted by my good friend from Minnesota. There is nothing more critical to our survival than water. It is essential to our survival; it sustains human life. Its patterns have dictated the development of species and ecosystems, and more recently, of the bilky environment. I am pleased that we are celebrating this landmark legislation, and not just a celebration, but an opportunity to reflect upon what has worked and why, as my friend from Tennessee indicated, where we might go. We have an opportunity to understand where there are continuing challenges and what else needs to be done.

We must move beyond commemoration. We must make a commitment not to celebrate another milestone with the Clean Water Act without more demonstrable progress here at home and abroad. And I hope this resolution inspires further action that is both quick and ambitious.

Issues confronting us today and over the next 35 years are even more complex than when the Clean Water Act was enacted. There are still problems with pollution, water supply, infrastructure integrity, and the technical jurisdictional issues. The growth and development we've seen across the country compounds that. And global warming gives these issues a new sense of urgency. We just finished a meeting, and I know the Transportation and Infrastructure team met with officials from the Netherlands, who are dealing with immediate challenges with their water resources as a result of climate change, rising water levels and extreme water events.

Changing climate will have an influence on many aspects of our lives, and it will take many of them in the form of water; floods, sea levels, drought. This will make water supply and quality issues much harder to deal with.

In the Pacific Northwest, for instance, where we rely heavily on hydroelectric power, where the snowpack in the mountains every year determines the amount of our drinking water, we have a sense of urgency as we watch that snowpack diminish.

Just this last month, there have been two additional reports highlighting the work in front of us. A report by the U.S. PIRG found that thousands of facilities across the United States continue to exceed the limits under their Clean Water Act permits; 57 percent violated those permit limits at least once during the year 2005, many for more than once, and many for more than one pollutant.

A report by Food and Water Watch found that the majority of States are facing current and projected wastewater infrastructure needs that are far out of line with their available funding. At the same time, Federal support for State and community wastewater projects has declined.

When my good friend first came to Congress in the early days of this program, 78 percent of the funding was supplied by the Federal Government in 1978. Now, maybe we don't want to

return to those glorious days of yesteryear, but last year it was 3 percent of the funding. It undercuts the potential partnership that we have. And all of this at a time when our decaying water infrastructure was recently given a grade of D minus by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

For these reasons, I believe we need a sustainable, reliable, dedicated revenue source that will help communities address these important needs.

Clean water is critical to environmental and public health. But I think it also, as demonstrated by the action here on this floor, has the potential of bringing people together. Mr. Oberstar mentioned the history back in contentious times when there was an overwhelming vote to sustain a veto, not the easiest thing to do. As was shown by this bipartisan resolution, I found working with the Water Resources Subcommittee that this brings people together and there is common ground.

This bipartisan resolution is evident of recent polling that shows that more than eight in 10 Americans are very concerned about America's water, that it will not be clean or safe enough for their children or grandchildren. Eighty-nine percent of Americans say that "Federal investment to guaranteed clean and safe water is a critical component of our Nation's environmental well-being."

I hope that, even as we move beyond commemoration and towards addressing some of these critical unresolved issues, that we can keep the same spirit of bipartisanship.

I hope our colleagues will do more than just vote for this resolution. I hope we educate ourselves and our constituents about what it represents, what it represents in terms of the status of water quality and infrastructure in our own State and community, offer our own contributions to practical solutions, and, as I said, a dedicated trust fund and financial resources to do the job right.

Mr. Oberstar gave us 50 years of history in a very short period of time. I hope this commemoration is a point of departure for the next 50 months under the leadership of the chairman, with the work of Mr. Duncan, with a new administration that's coming to town, that we will have, over these next 50 months, a landmark in water quality, and I look forward to working with you all in achieving it.