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This Week In Congress Radio Address: Improvement Program for Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, 1954 May 5
Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear
Transcribed by: David Cardillo


Mr. Kelly: From Washington, DC, transcribed, United States Senator J. Allen Frear reports again to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, Senator Frear.

Senator Frear: Thank you. The recent announcement by the Bureau of the Budget recommending approval of the proposed major improvement program for the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal is indeed encouraging. The question of whether or not Congress will implement this recommendation with necessary funds is not as yet answered. It would appear somewhat doubtful that the funds required, about ninety-six million dollars ($96,000,000), will be forthcoming this year. It is to be hoped, however, that if appropriations cannot be secured during this Eighty-Third Congress, that they will be made available for this extremely necessary work in the early future. As many Delawareans know, especially those in lower New Castle County, the pending improvements along the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal include replacement of the present two-lane highway bridge at Summit with a high-level, fixed four-lane structure. The many compelling reasons for this new bridge have been set forth on previous occasions. A new four-lane crossing is badly needed to accommodate not only present traffic load, but the rapidly increasing number of civilian and military vehicles, which are using our Delaware highway. And we all know the lower part of our state is in the process of a significant expansion, which has been brought about to a major degree by the establishment of the Military Air Transport Command at Dover. This installation, a huge undertaking in itself, is also attracting the lower New Castle and Kent Counties additional citizens, business establishments, and a little later on, tourists and other travelers who will be interested in seeing the newly renovated Dover base. Adequate bridges and roads to meet the needs of transportation to this area are essential. The requirement for a new bridge at Summit has been foreseen for some time. In 1949, I offered legislation to authorize the new Summit Bridge and have constantly endeavored to obtain Congressional approval of this project. We have made some progress to the extent of securing a formal recommendation for the new structure from the Corps of Engineers. The
Federal authorities have insisted that the Summit Bridge be included as a part of the overall canal improvement program instead of being acted upon as a separate issue. Such an arrangement would be quite satisfactory if we are sure of obtaining the funds for the canal itself in the near future. While, as I have indicated, the Bureau of the Budget’s recommendation in favor of the overall improvement program for this vital waterway is encouraging, yet because of the fact that appropriations are almost certain to be delayed for its implementation, I strongly feel Congress should proceed to promptly consider and pass S. 121, which Senator Williams and I are co-sponsoring for the new Summit Bridge. It must be remembered that this proposed new four-lane crossing is needed not only to improve our highway system, but also to promote safety in that particular section of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal where it crosses. We know that our waterways, the canal, the Chesapeake Bay, the Delaware River, and the Christina River, are vitally important to the continued welfare of our state. All of these waterways should be constantly kept in a proper state of maintenance. This includes such things as a forty-foot channel in the Delaware River between Philadelphia and the sea, adequate, safe anchorages in the river for ships, the removal of the dangerous dens in the canal, and of course, replacement of the obsolete bridges which span that waterway. As we have mentioned so many times before, the State of Delaware contributes heavily to the Federal government in taxes each year. We have every right to expect a reasonable return in the way of Federal assistance so that needed government projects can be carried forward, which will ensure the advancement of a sound and prosperous economy for Delaware in the years ahead.

Mr. Kelly: Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation’s capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in his regular report to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Senator Frear will be heard again next week at this same time.

[End 05:48]