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This Week In Congress Radio Address: Importance of Expanding and Maintaining Delaware River,

1954 March 3

Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear

Transcribed by: David Cardillo

**[00:00]**

Announcer: The Week in Congress, recorded on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954, and played on WDOV on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1954.

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. Many of us in Delaware who are used to looking at the Delaware River and watching the almost steady procession of ships of all types passing up and down its channel are aware of the importance of this great waterway to our economic welfare. The Delaware River is most assuredly an international highway, connecting, as it does, the ports of Wilmington and Philadelphia with most other parts of the world. In addition to its tremendous commercial value, the river has, for years, been used by many of our warships and other naval vessels which are built, repaired, and birthed at the famed Philadelphia Navy Yards. In order to adequately accommodate shipping in the Delaware River, congress, in 1938, authorized the Army engineers to maintain a channel forty feet deep between Philadelphia and the sea. The width of this channel is authorized at one thousand feet in the Delaware Bay and eight hundred feet in the river proper, with some increase width around the channel bends. In addition to the channel, congress authorized the Army engineers to provide and maintain various anchorage areas. The forty foot channel project was completed at the beginning of World War II and was maintained for a time at this depth. In recent years, however, the channel has filled up in places because of the failure to maintain adequate dredging. I am told the depths now are as shallow as thirty-one feet. Such a situation contributes dangerously to the likelihood of vessels running aground and thus causing loss of cargo and life. Furthermore, the failure to ensure adequate anchorage areas for ships coming into the river can safely stop because of fog or other conditions increases the danger of collisions, a number of which have occurred in recent months. The authorities at our Port of Wilmington are greatly interested in the restoration of the forty foot channel in the Delaware River, and this week, in association with port authorities from Pennsylvania and New Jersey appeared before members of the Senate Appropriations Committee to

encourage approval of necessary funds to return the channel to a forty foot depth and provide for its proper maintenance thereafter. The amount of money estimated to restore the forty foot channel is eight million, four hundred thousand dollars (\$8,400,000). The sum required annually to maintain the river will be about three million, two hundred thousand dollars (\$3,200,000). This amount is exceedingly small for a river which is expected to carry millions of dollars' worth of cargo each year. In addition, this amount is scarcely a tiny fraction of the money sought and appropriated annually for various rivers and harbors projects, and reclamation work in other areas of the country, especially the west. Representatives of our commercial shipping interests in Delaware have urged the state's congressional delegation to interest itself to the fullest possible extent in behalf of the proposal to obtain required funds for the forty foot depth. The state's congressional delegation is also greatly interested in obtaining an appropriation of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to help control beach erosion along our coastline. This sum, to which Delaware will add an additional twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), will go toward a cooperative study to determine the type of action most necessary and desirable to correct a situation which is causing property damage and threatening the existence of our finest beaches. I am indeed hopeful that congress will acknowledge the dire need for these projects, and take necessary action to approve funds for them.

The eyes of our diplomats are turning southward this week to Caracas, Venezuela, where Secretary of State Dulles and his staff have arrived for the Tenth International Conference, which is opening there. Such subjects as communism, the price of coffee, and financial matters are slated to be discussed at this meeting. [05:05] I am glad to note that the Secretary of State is reported anxious to lead a vigorous effort against communist infiltration in Latin America. Most assuredly, this is a matter which demands and must have the constant attention of our representatives now and in the future. The country of Guatemala, which reportedly harbors the strongest communist influence is due for special attention. American authorities, I am sure, have no desire to oppress or threaten any of the governments in Central or South America. As I have said before in discussing this situation, we need and want the continued cooperation of our friends in Latin America, of which we have many. There is much to be gained through an intelligent and mutually beneficial program of commercial and economic activities among the peoples of North and South America. And of course, there is also the urgent matter of national defense. It is therefore to be hoped that the Caracas conference will go far toward fulfilling the responsibilities which rest heavily upon the leaders of our Latin American neighbors and the government of the United States.

Our calendar this week is again quite full, and I am glad to say includes the meeting with the national commander of the American Legion at a banquet in Dover.

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.

**[End 06:52]**