

WASHINGTON BY-LINE  
SPRING EQUALS FLOODS

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THE WEATHER IS GETTING WARMER. FLOWERS ARE BEGINNING TO BLOOM. HOWEVER, SOME SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENTS HAVE THEIR MINDS ON A MUCH MORE SEVERE ASPECT OF SPRING, FLOODS.

THE MEMORY OF APRIL, 1977, IS ALL TOO CLEAR IN THE MINDS OF THOSE LIVING IN THE TUG RIVER VALLEY. IN SOME CASES, THE VICTIMS OF THAT DISASTER ARE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF RECOVERING.

SINCE 1954, THIS REGION OF SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA AND EASTERN KENTUCKY, HAS BEEN HIT BY 17 SEPARATE FLOODS, AN AVERAGE OF ONE FLOOD EVERY 1.3 YEARS. DURING THIS 25 YEAR PERIOD, THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION HAS APPROVED DISASTER LOANS TOTALING OVER \$47 MILLION DOLLARS. THE FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION HAS OBLIGATIONS THAT NOW TOTAL OVER \$10 MILLION DOLLARS, AND CLAIMS PAID OUT BY THE FEDERAL INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION NOW EXCEED \$7 MILLION.

THESE FIGURES OF COURSE DO NOT INCLUDE FUNDS SPENT BY THE STATES OF WEST VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY FOR RECOVERY EFFORTS.

FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PART, \$64 MILLION HAS BEEN SPENT, WHICH IS ALMOST \$3 MILLION FOR EVERY FLOOD.

HR 41, WHICH IS LEGISLATION INTRODUCED ON JANUARY 15, OF THIS YEAR, WOULD PROVIDE \$100 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD CONTROL MEASURES ALONG THE TUG FORK VALLEY. THIS MEASURE WOULD ALSO ELIMINATE THE MAJOR ROAD BLOCK IN OBTAINING FLOOD PROTECTION FOR THIS REGION; THE COST-BENEFIT-RATIO.

IN A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AND A HALF, "COST-BENEFIT-RATIO" HAS BECOME A HOUSEHOLD WORD IN SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA. UNTIL IT IS DONE AWAY WITH, FAMILIES WILL HAVE TO KEEP SPENDING RAINY NIGHTS WATCHING THE TUG RIVER RISE, IN HOPES IT WILL NOT REPEAT ITS' RAMPAGE OF APRIL, 1977.

RECENTLY, I HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, AND HAVE REQUESTED FROM THEM, A LIST OF THE TEN MOST FLOOD PRONE REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY, WHICH BY THE WAY, ALSO DO NOT MEET THE COST-BENEFIT-RATIO. ONCE THIS IS RECEIVED, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WILL UNDERTAKE A STUDY, AT MY REQUEST, THAT WILL DETERMINE THE TOTAL FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES FOR DISASTER RELIEF IN THESE REGIONS. ARMED WITH THIS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, I AM HOPEFUL THAT LAWMAKERS FROM THESE EFFECTED REGIONS WILL SEE THE NEED, AS WE DO, FOR LONG TERM FLOOD PROTECTION IN THEIR DISTRICTS AS WELL.

IN THE LONG RUN, I BELIEVE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS PUT MUCH MORE INTO THE CLEANING UP OF FLOOD DAMAGE, THAN ANY COST-BENEFIT-RATIO WOULD ALLOW. THE FUNDS PUT INTO RELIEF, CAN JUST AS WELL GO INTO PREVENTION.