

July 9, 1938

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

The Trinity Improvement Association, to which has been delegated the responsibility of carefully studying and sponsoring the improvement of the Trinity River and its watershed, is of the definite conclusion that there must be a coordinated program, to include:

1. Soil and water conservation;
2. Flood control;
3. Navigation;
4. Reclamation of flood lands;
5. Alleviation of stream pollution;
6. Conservation of wild life; and
7. Storage of water for municipal, industrial and agricultural uses.

With the exception of demonstration projects, there is not in the Trinity Watershed a single State or Federal project pertaining to soil and water utilization, either completed or under way, although such projects are being carried out on all of the other major watersheds of the State. This circumstance is due to the fact that, for several years, our efforts have been directed to developing a program of improvement in which:

The Federal Government would be called upon for the minimum expenditure; and
Public money would not be wastefully expended; so that
The people of this area might receive the maximum benefits.

STATUS OF PROJECT

All of the Federal agencies assigned to studies of this program have made favorable reports in their preliminary studies. At the present time, the War Department and the Department of Agriculture are engaged in

preparing a coordinated report to embrace all of the above-named phases. Approximately \$400,000 of government funds have been set aside for this study, and the final report is to be completed by August 15, 1939.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

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The Trinity Watershed comprises all or part of 39 counties in Texas and contains approximately 17,800 square miles, of which about 5,000,000 acres are now cultivated. Some interesting facts concerning this cultivated land follow:

Less than 3% has NOT been damaged by erosion.

More than 250,000 acres of land formerly cultivated have been abandoned due to erosion.

Over 95% has lost from 5 to 75 per cent of the top soil through sheet erosion and gullying.

Nearly 1/4 of the cultivated land of the watershed has lost over 50 per cent of its top soil.

About 3 billion tons of soil have been lost, the resulting decrease in farm values being estimated at over \$60,000,000.

With a proper soil and water conservation program, incorporating such methods as terracing, contour cultivation, strip cropping, and the retirement to timber or pasture of such areas as are best adapted to those purposes, the use of these millions of acres of tillable and pasture land can be retained for future generations.

FLOOD CONTROL

Aided by and inseparable from erosion prevention is the controlling of flood waters. While the average annual discharge of the Trinity is about 5,000,000 acre feet, it has varied from about 750,000 to 12,000,000 acre feet.

This resource, probably second in value only to the soil, is now permitted to rush seaward, unused and, in addition, causing an annual loss of millions of dollars.

There are five large reservoirs on the headwaters of the Trinity, and over 50 per cent of the stored water of Texas is on the Trinity. In addition, there are some 52 levee districts in the watershed, as well as several drainage districts on the lower reaches of the river. The cost of

these conservation and reclamation projects exceeded \$30,000,000 and was borne solely by local interests, no part of it being paid by the State or Federal Governments.

It might be well to point out, at this time, that while the Trinity Watershed contains only 1/15 of the state's area, approximately 1/4 of the people of the state reside within its boundaries and render more than 1/4 of the total assessed valuation of the state, producing, also, about 1/4 of the crop value of the state and owning 1/7 of its live stock value.

With a comprehensive flood control program, including additional reservoirs for the conservation and utilization of surface water, more than a million and a half acres of fertile land, now periodically overflowed, will be made available for agriculture and industry.

CANALIZATION

For more than 100 years, it has been the policy of the Congress of the United States to improve for practicable navigation the rivers and harbors of this nation. This national policy has been based upon three fundamental principles, as follows:

1. Aid to national defense;
2. Aid to interstate commerce; and
3. Aid to the development of the natural resources of the nation.

To determine if a project is worthy of development, certain fixed requirements are exacted by Congress; namely:

1. Engineering feasibility;
2. Economic justification; and
3. Public necessity.

Engineering Feasibility. From the various plans developed by the engineers of the Federal Government and of the local interests, with due credit to the railroads for their constructive criticism, we have produced and submitted to the Corps of Engineers a revision of their Survey Plan of improvement. That this plan is indisputably feasible and practicable is established by the fact that the railroad engineers, during the last two hearings held by the Government Engineers, were unable to offer any criticism as to the soundness of this plan, which calls for a total expenditure of \$66,546,000, the amount allocated to the Federal Government being \$55,822,000 and to local interests \$10,724,000.

Economic Justification. Traffic surveys and economic studies have been made by the United States Department of Commerce and the Corps of Engineers, and by Ed. P. Byars, A. L. Reed, Ireland Hampton, and Theodore Brent, representing the local interests. The facts developed by these economists show an average minimum annual saving in excess of \$8,000,000, which beyond any doubt establishes the project as economically justified.

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Public Necessity. The improvement of the Trinity River for practicable navigation has been necessitated by the improvement of rivers to the north and east of Texas and by the construction of the Intracoastal Canal along the coast. These improvements have been made in recent years at the expense of the Federal Government, and have given to Kansas City, St. Louis, Memphis, New Orleans, Beaumont, Houston and Galveston tremendous advantages over the interior of the Southwest. The completion of these projects make it imperative that the Trinity River be improved immediately, so as to protect the two billion dollars worth of investments already made in Dallas and Fort Worth and their trade territory; and, also, to insure the proper development of those basic natural resources of the Southwest which are now lying dormant. The development of these natural resources, such as iron ore, lignite, coal, potash, and gypsum, will immediately follow the improvement of the Trinity River for practicable navigation, thereby giving to this state and nation products which are vitally needed at this time.

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Just recently, the Congress of the United States adopted a project on the Red River, calling for the expenditure of approximately \$54,000,000 for the construction of a huge dam at Denison. This will insure practicable navigation on the Red River as far as Shreveport, and perhaps farther into the interior, which will result in much of the tonnage of North Texas, Eastern Arkansas and Southern Oklahoma moving to the Port of New Orleans. The Gulf Ports of Texas are entitled to all of this tonnage because of their geographical proximity. The diverting of this tonnage will mean a 25 per cent loss to our Texas Ports, where there already has been spent approximately \$200,000,000 by local and governmental agencies. By improving the Trinity River to Fort Worth, the Gulf Ports of Texas will be given a guarantee of the tonnage to which they are justly entitled.

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Other Benefits. Agricultural products, such as cotton and grain, would be produced and furnished to the domestic and foreign markets at a much lower cost, if the farmer is permitted to receive and ship by the most economical means of transportation -- water. At the present time, the farmer pays excessive transportation costs not only on what he produces but also on those items brought in for his use. The present railway rates to the territory tributary to the Trinity River are the highest in any part of the United States where a similar amount of tonnage is moving.

To be considered in connection with the development of the natural resources of the Southwest is the processing and fabricating of these products at the point of origin, which is the most economical procedure. This applies not only to the agricultural products but also to the minerals, especially petroleum. The territory tributary to the Trinity River produces 50 per cent of the petroleum of the nation.

The resulting development of manufacturing would bring into the Southwest hundreds of thousands of new people and would insure its stabilization.

Extension of Inland Waterway System. The improvement of the Trinity River for practicable navigation is not an isolated local project, but is a logical extension of the existing inland waterway system. It would connect with the Mississippi-Ohio-Missouri-Great Lakes waterway systems by the Intracoastal Canal, and would afford to the Southwest an all-water movement of manufactured products from those areas. Likewise, it would afford those areas the advantage of receiving by an all-water movement the raw and manufactured products of the Southwest.

ADVOCATES OF PROJECT

Note should be taken of the type of groups sponsoring a project. We have on record unqualified endorsements of the Trinity project from the following groups:

1. State Democratic and Republican Committees of Texas,
2. East Texas, South Texas, and West Texas Chambers of Commerce,
3. Dallas and Fort Worth Chambers of Commerce, as well as all chambers of commerce within the Trinity Watershed,
4. Every civic and service organization in Fort Worth and Dallas,
5. Every Labor Union in Dallas and Fort Worth, with the exception of the Railroad Brotherhood,
6. Every retail, wholesale, and manufacturing association in the Dallas-Fort Worth area,
7. Every newspaper in the Trinity Watershed,
8. Clearing House Associations of Dallas and Fort Worth, and similar financial institutions throughout the Trinity Watershed,
9. Farm organizations, such as Texas Cotton Growers Assn., Texas Cooperative Council, Texas State Grange, and other State agricultural associations,
10. Numerous large business concerns throughout this area,
11. All County Commissioners' Courts in the Trinity Watershed,
12. Port cities of Houston, Galveston, and Beaumont,
13. Intracoastal Canal Association of Louisiana and Texas, which officially represents all ports along the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast.
14. Individuals, institutions, civic and service clubs throughout the watershed and State.

The National Rivers and Harbors Congress, which embraces the entire United States, not only has endorsed the project, but has placed it on its preferred list of projects that must be improved immediately. In addition, we have the militant backing of the Mississippi Valley Assn., the Ohio Valley Improvement Assn., the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Tidewater Assn., the National Gulf-Atlantic (Florida) Ship Canal Assn., the Columbia Valley Assn., the Arkansas Valley Improvement Assn., and many other similar waterway organizations throughout the nation.

In conclusion, Mr. President, this is by far the most constructive and beneficial project yet undeveloped in Texas and unless we can carry this program to a successful conclusion Fort Worth, Dallas and this part of the state will eventually become isolated insofar as our future growth and development are concerned.

We sincerely hope you will lend us a friendly hand.

Respectfully submitted.

Most sincerely,

Chairman, Executive Committee.

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