

Oberstar Democracy Project



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Inside this issue:

Iraq War	1
49er's Open House	1
WRDA	2
Heaney Bill	2
Contact FOJO	3
Volunteer!	4

Congress Targets Troop Withdrawal

This week the US House of Representatives passed a supplemental appropriations bill that funds US troops in Iraq, and sets a non-binding date for their withdrawal. "We have given President Bush all of the funding he has requested," said Congressman Jim Oberstar. "But this is not a blank check; Congress wants to see an exit strategy."

The bill approves \$124 billion in supplemental funding for the troops, but includes provisions such as an August 31st, 2008 date for troop withdrawal. The Senate version does not include a specific date, but contains language providing for a specific "goal" to bring our troops home.

Oberstar speculated about the final version of the bill, "The language in this bill is not as strong as I would like to see," he said, "But it does direct the President to come forward with a plan to end our involvement in Iraq."

Congress would like to see the bill signed into law quickly, "Our continued presence in Iraq is not serving any U.S. foreign policy interest. We have toppled Saddam Hussein and Iraq has established a government, an Iraqi army and police force. Eighty percent of the Iraqi people want us to leave their country. Our mission is accomplished, it's time to bring our troops home with honor."

"The unfortunate fact is that our troops are caught in a civil war between Sunni and Shi'ite factions; it is a conflict that has gone on for centuries," Oberstar continued. "Our forces are not going to be able to solve their dispute; this is something the Iraqi people will have to resolve on their own."

The Senate will approve the legislation shortly, and the bill will be sent to President Bush's desk for approval, or a veto that would send the bill back to Congress.

Local 49 Opens New Training Facility



Congressman Oberstar talks with (left to right) Glen Johnson, Business Manager, IUOE Local 49, State Senator Tony Lourey, District 8, and Vince Giblin, General President of IUOE in Washington DC.

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49 opened a new training center in Cloverdale, MN April 14th. The facility spans 400 acres just outside of St. Croix State Park, and will provide aspiring equipment operators with a number of different training.

"We do all kinds of trainings, from classroom safety and hazardous materials training, to hands on training on almost any piece of equipment including; cranes, blades, backhoes, blades, scrapers and dozers. We even offer a GPS class," said Adam Duinick,



the political coordinator for Local 49.

Vince Giblin, the national president of IUOE thanked Congressman Oberstar for his commitment to organized labor, "Jim has always been there for us," he said.

"This new facility is a wonderful addition to the 8th Congressional District," Oberstar said, "it stresses the importance of safety and provides the training to ensure the continued success of operators in Local 49"



Water Resources Bill Passes House

The Water Resources and Development Act, which invests \$14 billion in our nation's waterways and environment, passed the House last week with wide bipartisan support. The bill was continually blocked under the previously Republican controlled Congress, regardless of its nonpartisan nature,

"Unfortunately, Republican leaders in the House and Senate have not made this legislation a priority, even though it has support on both sides of the aisle," said Oberstar.

WRDA will impact a wide range of issues, economics, conservation, and infrastructure upgrades. \$341 million will go towards a second lock on the St. Lawrence Seaway, to accommodate newer, larger vessels, and cut time shipping goods to market and transit, making us more competitive in the world market. It also authorizes money to dredge the Great Lakes harbors and channels, the money has not been reauthorized since 2000, and the water levels have dropped, "Vessels carrying iron ore from the upper lakes to the lower lakes' steel mills have gone out 75 hundred

tons light; it means two or three extra voyages each season," said Oberstar. "That raises the cost of iron ore and steel; affecting our competitiveness."

Here are a few other projects undertaken by WRDA:

Army Corps of Engineers

Coastal Louisiana - authorizes \$949.6 million to restore coastal wetlands and provide hurricane protection projects in coastal Louisiana.

Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) - authorizes \$1.8 billion for navigation improvements and \$1.8 billion to restore ecosystems and protect against invasive species on the UMR-IWW.

Everglades Restoration - authorizes \$1.4 billion for the Indian River Lagoon-South project for wetlands and estuarine restoration and \$375.3 million for the Picayune Strand ecosystem restoration project.

Corp Projects in Minnesota

Grand Marais and Knife River Harbors - redesigning harbor entrances and moorings to

improve navigation and safety.

Silver Bay and Taconite Harbors - shift the responsibility to the federal government for dredging, ongoing maintenance, and operations.

Two Harbors - \$5 million to construct a dredge material disposal facility.

McQuade Road Safe Harbor - \$1 million for additional recreational enhancements.


Duluth-Superior Harbor, - fund studies to determine causes of corrosion to port infrastructure and costs of repair.

Northeastern Minnesota

\$14 million for the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District to build storm water retention ponds necessary to keep raw sewage from flowing into Lake Superior during heavy rainstorms.

Central Iron Range - \$12 million to build a central wastewater treatment plan for Buhl, Hibbing, Chisholm, and Kinney.

Grand Rapids - \$5 million to upgrade wastewater treatment facilities



"He is enormously respected for his courage and standing and his steadfastness. Just as he pursued the German forces across France and Germany, he pursued justice in the name of all of our fellow citizens as a sitting judge," Oberstar said.

Congressman Jim Oberstar commenting on the Hon. Gerald Heaney

Heaney Bill to be Signed into Law

The bill that Congressman Jim Oberstar penned to name the Duluth Federal Building after retired U.S. District Court Judge Gerald Heaney is on its way to the Whitehouse. Senator Amy Klobuchar introduced the identical legislation into the Senate which was passed in late March. The bill is expected to be signed into law by President Bush in the coming weeks.

Heaney served as a Federal Judge on the 8th Circuit Court, and was instrumental in many landmark court decisions; one ruling that desegregated public schools in St. Louis, Missouri. Heaney also served his country in WWII, leading troops on Omaha Beach in Normandy. Heaney is a war hero, and his service ended after US and allied Russian troops met in Ger-

many.

Oberstar looks to commemorate Heaney and his life of public service with the bill, "He is enormously respected for his courage and standing and his steadfastness. Just as he pursued the German forces across France and Germany, he pursued justice in the name of all of our fellow citizens as a sitting judge," Oberstar said.

Jim Oberstar

WORKING for you for minnesota

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More Pictures From the Local 49 Open House



Jim Oberstar

WORKING for you 
for minnesota

E-mail _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please contact me about—

The Oberstar Democracy Project

Volunteering

Traveling around MN to support Democrats

Placing a lawn sign in my yard

Writing a letter to the editor

Using my name and testimonial

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Please sign me up for—

The Oberstar Democracy Project

E-mail updates from Jim

Please share your story about Jim:
