

Financial constraints, environmental concerns, and the availability of less expensive, less environmentally intrusive alternatives led the House to reject previous Auburn Dam proposals—and they will do so again if the issue is brought before Congress. Every time this proposal has been reincarnated, its estimated costs have risen dramatically. This time, the price tag has ballooned to just under \$1 billion. At a time when the Congress is grappling with the question of exactly how to balance the Federal budget and desperately seeking solutions on how to deal with our \$5 trillion public debt, how can the Congress possibly justify the unnecessary expenditure of such a gross amount of money?

It is not necessary to build a dam at Auburn in order to protect the California Central Valley community and the city of Sacramento from flooding in the event of a storm the size of any which have previously struck. In order to justify the latest proposal, proponents claim that the dam is needed to protect the region from storms that are far larger than the greatest flood that may reasonably be expected on the American River. Fortunately, however, the Corps of Engineers and regional flood control authorities have identified much less expensive alternatives which will significantly improve the performance of Sacramento's flood control system. And it is possible that these alternatives could be paid for by the local community without any Federal funding—or at least without the majority of project costs being borne by Federal taxpayers.

In order to build the latest Auburn Dam, project supporters expect U.S. taxpayers to bear 75 percent of its approximate cost of \$1 billion. I feel strongly that the Federal civil works program is not an entitlement program, and that it certainly should not be expected to bear this kind of burden in the case of a regional water project. Those who know flood control concur with this assessment. In fact, the National Academy of Engineering released a blue ribbon report on the American River flood control project which found that, since the project was without widespread benefits and located in an area with substantial financial resources, there was no Federal interest in additional flood control work on the American River.

But cost is far from the only reason why I am introducing this bill today. A few months ago, the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] declared an Auburn Dam to be environmentally unacceptable. Each year, about half a million people visit the American River canyons that would be inundated by such a dam, and many of them strongly oppose actions by their government to take this resource away from them. Up to 39 miles of pristine canyon habitat would be flooded by a dam built according to the latest proposal, robbing wildlife of precious habitat. Citizens and editorial boards throughout California have denounced the dam in both its past and present incarnations.

This dam was stopped in the seventies because of concerns about seismic safety. It never moved forward during the eighties because of President Reagan's commitment to seek full reimbursement for the water and power benefits which a multipurpose dam would provide to the region and its residents. In the nineties, Congress has thus far said no once already to an Auburn Dam because of economic and environmental concerns. My in-

roduction of this legislation today is intended to send a strong message: Congress must say no to building an Auburn Dam once again—for all of the above reasons.

A REQUEST FOR KINDNESS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 1, 1996

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Kindness Week in the city of Dallas, scheduled for the week of February 11, 1996. The mission of this event is to celebrate and promote the value and spirit of kindness, and to help bring all races, religious, and socioeconomic groups within the city of Dallas together to foster understanding among us all.

As a part of the celebration of Kindness Week, I ask all the citizens of Dallas to come together in the true spirit of the week, and if possible, to attend a formal "Kindness Celebration" at Thanksgiving Square, at 12 p.m. on February 14, 1996.

This week-long event presents the city of Dallas an opportunity that seldom occurs: a chance to lead the Nation, and hopefully the world, in making our small planet a better place to live. Attitudes are contagious, and with a unified effort, Dallas can assist the Nation in creating an attitude of kindness that can carry on for years to come.

I ask all of my friends in Dallas to participate in Kindness Week in a variety of ways, all of which are easily done but pay big rewards. Such things as visiting a senior center, driving safely and courteously, and speaking with an old friend take very little effort and time, and create a good feeling for each person involved. Compliment rather than criticize; help rather than shout; and smile rather than frown. Each of us has a role to play, and I hope we will all do our part in Kindness Week.

TRIBUTE TO REAR ADMIRAL FREDERICK JULIAN BECTON

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 1, 1996

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am saddened today to bring to your attention the recent passing of Frederick Julian Becton, a retired Rear Admiral of the United States Navy. A true hero, Admiral Becton demonstrated his courage and mettle many times over throughout his 35 years of military service.

A World War II hero, Admiral Becton passed away in his hometown of Wynnwood, PA, on Christmas Eve at the age of 87. No episode better portrays Admiral Becton's tenacity and bravery than when he refused to abandon his ship during one of the most punishing attacks of the war. Admiral Becton was later awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism as Commander of the USS *LAFFEY* in action against Japanese forces off Okinawa, on April 16, 1945 . . . with his ship under savage attack by 30 hostile planes."

I would like to submit for the RECORD an article that appeared on December 26, 1995 in

the Philadelphia Inquirer regarding Admiral Becton. When you read this article, I am sure that you too will come to understand what a fine gentleman and hero that America has lost. I know that my colleagues join me today in mourning the passing of Admiral Becton, an American hero.

F. BECTON, NAVY HERO IN WWII

(By Larry Fish)

Frederick Julian Becton, a retired rear admiral who was awarded the Navy Cross for refusing to give up his ship after one of the most punishing attacks of World War II, died Sunday in Wynnwood at age 87.

A native of Arkansas and a 1931 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Adm. Becton was a lieutenant when the war broke out. He was to see action in the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters and would win many decorations and medals for his exploits.

The most dramatic came in April 1945, when the destroyer USS *Laffey*, commanded by Adm. Becton, was off Okinawa on radar picket duty.

The *Laffey* was a relatively new ship but had already been bloodied—in June 1944, when it supported the D-Day invasion of Normandy and participated in the bombardment of Cherbourg, France. Among its scars from that engagement was an unexploded 8-inch shell lodged in the superstructure.

By this late stage of the war, the Japanese had begun to expand the use of kamikaze attacks, the suicidal crashing of armed planes into Allied ships.

For the *Laffey*, the attack began shortly after sunrise April 16 with a formation of four planes. The kamikazes split up to make it more difficult for the crew to keep guns trained on them, and the assault was on.

It was to last 79 minutes, and eventually, 22 planes drew a bead on the *Laffey*. Adm. Becton, wearing a steel helmet and life vest, stood in the open to better see the action.

Planes seemed to come from every direction and altitude, he said in an Inquirer interview shortly before the 50th anniversary of the battle this year.

Though the *Laffey*'s gunners and those from nearby craft were aided by U.S. warplanes, some of the kamikaze inevitably found their mark.

"Each time one crashed, there was always a flood of gasoline from the plane—and one hell of a fire," Adm. Becton told The Inquirer.

The guns took out at least eight of the planes, but five hit the destroyer, jamming its rudder and spreading fire everywhere.

"Near the end of the action, one of my officers, Frank Mason, came to me and said, 'Captain, we're in pretty bad shape aft. Do you think you'll have to abandon ship?'"

"It never entered my mind to abandon ship. The ship might sink under us. We might not be able to sail her. But I wasn't going to abandon her.

"So I said, 'No, Frank, I'll never abandon ship as long as a gun will fire.'"

Thirty-one crew members died, and the *Laffey* had to be towed to Seattle, where a newspaper reported that it was "riddled like a sieve above the water line."

The citation for the Navy Cross praised Adm. Becton's "extraordinary heroism" in keeping his ship afloat and in action.

He was promoted to captain in 1951 and to rear admiral in 1959, and was assigned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel and other posts. When he retired in 1966, he and his wife, the former Elizabeth Hilary Reuss, moved to her hometown of Wynnwood.

He wrote a book on his experience—*The Ship That Would Not Die*—and kept in touch with many former crew members.

He is also survived by two daughters, Hilary Becton Wagner and Julie Bradford Becton.