

as we provided almost \$600,000 in November to deliver supplies and build flood-resistant homes. We stand ready to provide further help to meet the urgent needs of those affected by the flooding and to help the Vietnamese people better withstand future flooding.

**Statement on Signing Legislation  
To Protect a Segment of the  
Chattahoochee River**

*December 9, 1999*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2140, a bill that will enhance the protection of a 48-mile segment of the Chattahoochee River, a vital natural resource for the Atlanta metropolitan area and an important unit of the National Park System. This legislation ensures that the natural, scenic, recreational, and historic values of one of our Nation's great urban rivers will be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

This Act provides the foundation for a cooperative effort by the Federal Government, the State of Georgia, local governments, and private entities to link the separate units of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area through purchases of remaining open space along the Chattahoochee River corridor north of Atlanta. It gives the National Park Service the authority to expand the land base of the recreation area from approximately 6,800 acres to 10,000 acres through a revision of the boundary, by adding undeveloped land within the 2,000-foot river bank corridors. The National Park Service also will be authorized to exclude some properties currently within the boundary that are no longer suitable for the park because they have been developed.

From the time the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was established in 1978, the pace of residential and commercial development in the Chattahoochee River corridor has accelerated rapidly. A U.S. Census Bureau report issued earlier this year names Forsyth County, Georgia, where the recreation area boundary begins, the fastest-growing county in the Nation. The three other counties in which the recreation area lies are also experiencing a surge in growth.

This Act will enable the National Park Service to spend funds that were appropriated in the 105th Congress, as well as funds that have been or will be contributed by State and local governments and private interests, to acquire the remaining open space in the Chattahoochee River corridor before those properties are developed for residential and commercial purposes.

The Act is strongly supported on a bipartisan basis by Georgia's congressional representatives, Georgia State and local government officials, the National Park Service, and private organizations, including the Trust for Public Land, which has played a key role in bringing together the various interests involved and developing a vision for the future of this critical area. It is with great respect and gratitude for those who made this legislation possible that I sign H.R. 2140 today.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2140, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-154.

**Statement on Signing Legislation To  
Establish Federal Criminal Penalties  
for Commerce in Depiction of  
Animal Cruelty**

*December 9, 1999*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1887, a bill that would establish Federal criminal penalties for the "creation, sale, or possession" of "a depiction of animal cruelty" with the intent to distribute such a depiction in interstate or foreign commerce, except when the depiction has "serious religious, political, scientific, educational, journalistic, historical, or artistic value."

I strongly support the objectives of this legislation. Its enactment should assist in reducing or eliminating some of the deplorable and indefensible practices that were identified during the Congress's deliberations on the bill and described in the House Judiciary Committee report on the bill.

Concerns were raised, however, during congressional consideration of H.R. 1887 that its application in certain contexts may

violate the First Amendment of the Constitution. It is important to avoid constitutional challenge to this legislation and to ensure that the Act does not chill protected speech. Accordingly, I will broadly construe the Act's exception and will interpret it to require a determination of the value of the depiction as part of a work or communication, taken as a whole. So construed, the Act would prohibit the types of depictions, described in the statute's legislative history, of wanton cruelty to animals designed to appeal to a prurient interest in sex. I will direct the Department of Justice to enforce the Act accordingly.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1887, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-152.

**Statement on Signing the U.S.  
Holocaust Assets Commission  
Extension Act of 1999**

*December 9, 1999*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2401, the "U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999." This legislation, which extends the mandate of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States for 1 year, is a clear demonstration of America's determination to pursue justice for Holocaust victims and their families.

The United States has led the renewed struggle for justice and compensation on behalf of the victims of the Holocaust. One year ago, delegations from 44 countries and 13 nongovernmental organizations met at the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets convened by the Department of State and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. During the Washington Conference, I announced the public and governmental members of the Presidential Advisory Commission, which was created to investigate and advise on the fate of Holocaust victims' assets that came into the possession or control of the United States Government.

Since then, the Presidential Advisory Commission has been hard at work and esti-

mates that it will have to examine more than 45 million pages of documents. To our Nation's credit, the amount of information to be reviewed increases every week as remaining Nazi-era documents are declassified. The U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999 provides the Presidential Advisory Commission with additional time and authorizes additional resources needed to complete the review of the historical record of American activity during one of the darkest periods of this century.

The Commission's research demonstrates irrefutably that we in the United States are willing to hold ourselves to the same high standard of truth about Holocaust assets to which we have held other nations. The extension of the Presidential Advisory Commission sends a strong message, both at home and abroad, that we are committed to examining difficult aspects of our history and determining how to build a better world for our children in the next millennium.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2401, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-155.

**Statement on Signing the John H.  
Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources  
System Act**

*December 9, 1999*

I am pleased to sign into law S. 1866, the "John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System Act." Renaming the Coastal Barrier Resources System in Senator Chafee's honor is an appropriate tribute to a man who worked so hard—and so successfully—to find common ground in the struggle to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

Senator Chafee authored the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, a law which protects pristine and fragile coastal barriers from development by restricting Federal expenditures that would otherwise encourage such development. This Act has successfully minimized the loss of human life by discouraging development in high-risk areas. It also has reduced