10-5-1978

President Jimmy Carter to Senator James O. Eastland,

Jimmy Carter (1924–)
To Senator Jim Eastland

I have decided to return H. R. 12928, the Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act, to the Congress without my approval. I take this action with regret because I respect the hard work and good intentions of the Members of Congress who have prepared this legislation and I support the energy sections of the bill and most of its other provisions. However, the water projects portions of the bill contain wasteful and unnecessary provisions which I simply cannot accept. At a time when all of us in the government are committed to fight inflation, we cannot afford to spend money where it is not really needed. By our actions, we in the government must set an example of fiscal responsibility for the rest of the Nation. I am determined to take with you and your colleagues the difficult but necessary steps to hold down Federal spending and to insure the effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs.

My objections to this bill are specific and are fully delineated in the enclosed veto message. If these changes are made, the public works legislation will be acceptable to me.

No challenge which we face together is more difficult than the exercise of budgetary restraint, particularly in individual bills. Yet, only through constant discipline can we achieve our shared objectives of controlling inflation, reducing the budget deficit, and making our government more efficient.

Control over the budget cannot be achieved by a single dramatic act. It will come as the cumulative result of many difficult choices such as this.

I ask your help and support in meeting our shared responsibilities to the American people. If we fail to set the right example, our Nation will certainly fail in the fight against inflation.
I urge you and other Members of the Congress to sustain my veto and to come back immediately with a reasonable bill that spends the American taxpayers' money wisely and which builds sound, advisable and needed projects that will be of benefit to our country.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

The Honorable James O. Eastland
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510