

APRIL 25, 2000

STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY ON THE ILLINOIS RIVERS 2020 PROGRAM

CHICAGO, IL -- *I am pleased to be here today with Lt. Governor Wood, and others who are committed to improving water quality and the environment in Illinois and to express my strong support for the Illinois Rivers 2020.*

The Illinois River and its tributaries are integral components in the lives of Illinois residents. The Illinois River serves as a link between the Atlantic Ocean, the Mississippi River and the Port of New Orleans. The status of the river has significant effects on water supply, recreation, tourism, and commerce in Illinois. In the Chicago area alone, the river and its tributaries are responsible for 34, 000 jobs and over \$400 million in payroll taxes annually.

This program makes a strong, comprehensive commitment to restoration efforts in the Illinois River Basin. The program will help to develop new and innovative approaches to water quality improvement, economic development and transportation, and land and habitat conservation.

Recently, I joined with the entire U.S. House Delegation from Illinois in writing to the Energy and Water and Agriculture Subcommittees of the House Appropriations Committee to request funding for this important program.

The district I represent, the 9th Congressional District, is completely within the Illinois River Basin. The Chicago River's North Branch extends throughout my district. And communities and organizations within the 9th Congressional District have already begun work on their own.

The Niles Park District stabilized eroding streambanks along the North Branch, created a wetland to reduce erosion and improve water quality, and installed an educational stand to describe the practices for the public. Also, the Friends of the Chicago River will implement a variety of best management practices within the watershed to reduce nonpoint source pollution. In addition, they will continue to implement a public outreach program on nonpoint source pollution control and water quality and will investigate possible policy changes needed to meet the plan's goals and objectives.

I look forward to a continuing relationship with the elected officials and organizations in my district and throughout that are dedicated to improved environmental quality and economic opportunity for the people of Illinois.