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House of Representatives

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2003

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGovern) for yielding me the time, and I rise today in support obviously of the rule, but also of the underlying bill, and especially the manager's amendment which the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. Young) will bring up later which authorizes a water-related infrastructure project of great interest and need in my district and to my constituents in Imperial County, California.

The New River, and that is the name of the river we are dealing with, the New River has been described as the world's worst polluted river. The river flows from Mexico north across the U.S. border and through my district in southern California. Due to grossly inadequate sewage treatment and solid waste facilities in Mexico, raw sewage, industrial waste and garbage are constantly released into the New River, hundreds of millions of gallons of raw sewage in the New River every year.

It is extremely polluted. It is foamy, foul-smelling. A person would not want their children to play anywhere near this

river. It violates water quality standards, and plants and animals cannot survive in much of the river. It continues to threaten the health of the residents of my district and even of undocumented immigrants who use the waterway to try to cross the international border.

A coalition of citizen groups and government agencies in my district, including the Calexico New River Committee, has developed a feasible plan that will significantly improve the quality of water that flows through this community. They need to be supported, and this bill, which authorizes the Nation's water-related projects, would authorize \$10 million to make sanitation improvements to this river. It is an extremely important first step in the process in enhancing the water quality of the New River, enriching life in our community and making a healthier home not only for the human beings, but for fish and wildlife.

So for the sake of my constituents at the U.S.-Mexico border, I urge my colleagues to support the manager's amendment and pass this bill.

