

Dick Lugar

U.S. Senator for Indiana

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Lugar resolution encourages cooperation over water as model for Arab-Israeli Peace talks

The U.S. Senate has approved Sen. Dick Lugar's resolution encouraging the governments of Israel and Jordan, as well as the Palestinian Authority, "to continue work in a spirit of cooperation as they address the region's serious water challenges."

"The governments of Israel and Jordan, as well as the Palestinian Authority, have worked together in unusual and welcome spirit of cooperation to address many of the water challenges confronting the region. The Senate applauds this cooperation and urges Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority to continue to work in a spirit of cooperation as it addresses the degradation of the Jordan River and Dead Sea and hopes this cooperation might serve as a model for Israel and the Palestinian Authority as they prepare to meet in Annapolis next week to seek a durable solution to the Arab-Israeli crisis," Lugar said.

Local governments have diverted more than 90 percent of the Jordan River's traditional 1.3 billion cubic meters of annual water flow in order to satisfy a growing demand for water in the arid region. This has been the primary cause of a 20 meter fall in the Dead Sea's water level and a one-third decline in the Dead Sea's surface area in less than 50 years. That has resulted in significant environmental damage, including loss of freshwater springs, river bed erosion and over 1,000 sinkholes.

The Jordan River – considered a holy place by Christianity, Islam and Judaism – is one of the world's 100 most endangered sites according to the World Monuments Fund.

Lugar's Senate Resolution 387 applauds the cooperative manner of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority on regional water issues. The resolution also supports their collective efforts "to assess the environmental, social, health and economic impacts, costs and feasibility of the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Concept in comparison to alternative proposals, such as those that focus on the restoration of the Jordan River."

Full text of Sen. Res. 387 can be found at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

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