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AN EXPANDING FEDERAL RECLAMATION PROGRAM

Recent shortages, primarily in food and energy, have caused a new public concern as to the use of resources that provide for the basic needs of society.

Until people actually saw empty shelves at the supermarket, saw "Sorry No Gasoline" signs at service stations, and felt cooler room temperatures during the winter, they did not give much thought to the origin of consumer products. They did not concern themselves with what is required to provide everyday products in adequate quantities.

In fact, prior to these experiences, it seems fair to say that we—as a Nation, and including our leaders—had become complacent and careless in our attitudes toward production relative to requirements.

The shortfalls we have experienced in vital items such as food and energy are grim reminders that we must continually
review National plans and policies, particularly concerning the development of the means of providing for necessities and the comforts of life.

Among the national resources which should be paramount in our rethinking is water. Careful and sound management of water is essential for any society that desires to meet the needs of its people. As populations grow and incomes increase, the need for better management of our scarce natural resources manifests itself more and more each year. Yet few people today have any conception of what complicated and costly developments must have taken place in order for water to come out of the kitchen tap when the valve is turned.

For seven decades, the Bureau of Reclamation has devoted its energies to finding better ways to manage water and related land resources. However, during the past few years, you may have heard rumors that the Bureau of Reclamation is finished, that it has outlived its usefulness, and that it is about to be shut down.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of our death have been greatly exaggerated. The record of the Bureau in recent years reflects a modified, purposeful, and expanding program. There is no phaseout in progress--or under consideration.

Interest in increased water resource development is reflected in Reclamation's budget. For fiscal years 1973 and 1974, and in the request for 1975, we see the three largest
budgets in Reclamation's history. With this level of funding, the physical construction accomplishment during this three-year period will exceed one billion dollars.

The Bureau of Reclamation is advancing into new areas of water management and augmentation by means of weather modification, geothermal research and recycling of irrigation runoff. In addition, we are focusing our attention on more efficient use of already developed water supplies through our irrigation management services program and the development of closed conduit distribution systems.

As indicated by all these activities, the concept of total water management is assuming increasing importance in the Reclamation program.

Plans are being selected that will maximize social well-being relative to the available water supply...with minimum disruption to environmental resources. These plans require proper allocation of water to irrigation, hydropower, municipal and industrial needs, recreation, and fish and wildlife enhancement to provide for a wholesome and balanced growth in each area.

No longer can any Federal agency--and particularly one with an impact as enormous as Reclamation's--be single-purpose in its programs. All such large programs must be integrated into all aspects of an area's life and growth. Reclamation
long since has become a multi-faceted agency which is concerned with development and use of all sources of water for all justified and authorized purposes. In conduct of its mission, Reclamation works closely with local, county, State, regional and Federal agencies and programs. Public involvement has become the rule and intensive efforts in this direction are underway.

The role of the Bureau of Reclamation in sustaining and strengthening the Nation will continue to be important. The United States economy and the world economy have been and still are going through a period of dramatic change. An increasing world population, coupled with poor weather conditions, has caused serious food shortages in the United States and elsewhere in the world. In India and Africa, drought-induced famine is having a very harsh impact on the population... and on world politics.

Since 1972, large exports of wheat, feed grains, cotton, and other agricultural products by the United States have placed a severe strain on domestic supplies and have caused United States food prices to soar. Consumers are complaining that sales to foreign countries have depleted local supplies and caused high prices.

How long will the overseas trade continue to expand? That is a difficult question. We do know that world population is expected to be 4 billion people by next year, and that people are demanding more and better food. We know, too, that trade with Russia, the People's Republic of China, and other
communist countries offers potential markets that have not been considered in projecting foreign trade levels for over 25 years.

Thus, it seems certain that world food needs will continue to expand, but food production problems will be intensified.

This is bound to throw a heavier responsibility on the United States to meet the world demand for food. The income from the sale of food helps us pay for the imported goods which we want.

If we are to enjoy imports from other countries (cars from West Germany, radios and television sets from Japan), we must export products. One of the very few areas in which we can compete successfully in world trade is agriculture, since the United States is the most efficient food producer in the world.

To further compound difficulties in the food situation, a short-fall in energy resources became painfully obvious in mid-1973 and continues to persist. The energy crisis has created a new look at national priorities and has caused anxiety in regard to the danger and fears of being dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Reduced energy supplies have increased unemployment, reduced the supplies of chemical fertilizers and low-cost insecticides, and increased the cost of producing electricity. The fuel shortage may have an adverse influence on our vital on-farm energy sources and, perhaps to a greater extent,
reduce our capacity for processing and transporting agricultural products.

Energy, extremely vital to our economy, is foremost in public concerns. However, water is of particular importance in almost every form of energy. Through multiple-purpose water resource management, the Reclamation program has almost since its inception been providing low-cost hydroelectric power which consumes no fossil fuels and requires considerably less maintenance than thermal or nuclear power generation.

Hydroelectric power is nonpolluting, can quickly adjust to changing demand, and, although it depends totally on water for spinning its generators, consumes no water in the process. Thus, hydro power becomes a significant bonus in multiple purpose water resource developments. Reclamation power experts are finding ways to increase the efficiency of power production at existing projects through more effective management in power operations.

Water management for the betterment of our economy requires a flexible national water policy, under which water can be shifted from one use to another depending on National needs and priorities.

In regions of the arid West, the water management problem is at the crossroads. The demand for water is being aggravated by the energy crisis, because water is vital to most of the new processes being considered...liquifaction of coal, coal gasification, coal slurry lines, oil from shale, and the
cooling of nuclear plants. With the present pressure for the use of water to expand production, the problem of continuing to provide adequate water supplies to satisfy the requirements for irrigation, municipal and industrial use, fish and wildlife, and recreation will become even greater.

To some, water management may appear to be a fairly easy proposition of simply balancing use with supply. However, it is not that clearcut. Water must be distributed relative to time and area, because runoff and demand seldom coincide. The service area may not be located near the water source which requires both regulation and transportation.

As a supply of water becomes fully committed and water use expands, a serious problem develops as to how to allocate the water among different uses.

What is most troublesome in a large water management program is the maintenance of adequate supplies to meet each separate need. Water users must be assured dependable service. In large river-basin management schemes, greater over-all efficiency is desirable, but quality service to the individual must be maintained. Where water supplies are ample, this may not be too much of a problem.

But in areas where water is becoming fully committed and development of each project must be integrated with other projects, meeting the demand for an individual purpose at a precise time becomes increasingly difficult.
Reclamation is making real headway in assuring that quality service will be maintained for the individual water user through the use of computer scheduling, television monitoring, better radio communication, and simulation techniques to improve designs and facilities.

Effective water management, when supplies are limited, can only be attained through coordination of authority, establishment of priorities, and agreement on guidelines for development and management strategy.

Over the years, Reclamation has been a leader in these areas, working closely and effectively with local, State and national leaders. Within its charter and the parameters set by the Congress, Reclamation has always been concerned primarily with meeting the needs of people.

Throughout its history—since 1902—Reclamation has helped the nation meet different challenges, providing water to reclaim the arid and semi-arid lands of the West, power for pumping that water and for lighting homes and running factories, and flood control to protect the people and their possessions on our projects.

In recent years the thrust of the Reclamation program has shifted more toward providing water for municipal and industrial use and toward the enhancement of the environment. We are spending millions of dollars each year to develop new recreational facilities, to mitigate the effects of our water resource development on fish and wildlife, and to
enhance the fisheries on many of our major western streams.

Today we are rearranging our priorities and giving greater emphasis to meeting the demands for the water which will be needed to develop new sources of energy.

But any suggestion that Reclamation has outlived its usefulness as a developer of new sources of water for multi-purpose use--including agriculture--must be strenuously resisted.

The memory of food surpluses in the United States in recent years still dominates the thinking of those who oppose authorization and funding of Reclamation projects which contain substantial irrigation benefits, but those surpluses no longer exist. The notion that the United States might one day soon be faced with food shortages instead of surpluses is only beginning to sink in.

I was interested to note in an Associated Press story on the Western Governor's Conference on Agriculture last month the following statement:

"The same excessive stress on the natural world which caused urban, environmental, land and energy crises will lead to a food crisis...and the food crisis is likely to make all the others look small by comparison."

That statement was attributed to Michael K. Glenn, special assistant to Russell Train, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Today, perhaps even more than in the recent past, there is a need for a vigorous and imaginative Reclamation program,
one which does not merely respond to crises, but ranges far ahead to prevent future crises.

It would be extremely shortsighted for us to curtail our planning and research merely because a crisis has not yet occurred.

Unless everyone—not only in the West, but through the Nation—recognizes the vital importance of planning ahead to meet our future water needs, we almost certainly will be faced with a water crisis. If we wait until that crisis is here, and then scramble to meet it as we are doing in meeting the energy crisis, the cure will cost us many times more than prevention. Further, it will not be nearly as effective... and the cost, both socially and monetarily, will be high.

To prevent our having to pay such an exorbitant price for our shortsightedness, we as a Nation must first become aware of the problems...and then become concerned enough to work towards solving them. We must meet the needs of the future through study and research, planning and community support, and finally through Congressional recognition of the needs and in appropriations for the program.

The Bureau of Reclamation is able and anxious to play a major role in preserving our way of life and strengthening the social and economic foundations of the Nation. Reclamation has risen many times to meet the challenges of the past and with the support of you and others like you, Reclamation will be ready to meet the challenge of the future.