FOR RELEASE IN PMS OF OCTOBER 23, 1973

REMARKS OF GILBERT G. STAMM
COMMISSIONER OF RECLAMATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE OREGON WATER RESOURCES CONGRESS
HERMISTON, OREGON
OCTOBER 23, 1973

During most of the years of my professional career, it has been my privilege to work with the Oregon Water Resources Congress and the other water and land resources organizations in the Pacific Northwest. The water problems of the entire West are highly complex and difficult. Solutions will not come easily. Organizations such as the Oregon Water Resources Congress offer us excellent opportunity to sit down together and discuss areas of mutual concern. Through such meetings we can identify and analyze the problems, examine alternative solutions, then join together in supporting both short-term and long-range solutions.

In the past several years we have heard some comment that the Bureau of Reclamation has completed its mission and that the need for its technical competence and capability has passed into limbo. In short, the Bureau supposedly has reached the end of its tether and is being phased out. This thesis, of course, is patently ludicrous. The needs for the Bureau's competence and capability are as great or greater today than at any other time in its 70-odd years in the field of conservation and development of our water and land resources. The broad scope and magnitude of our current program, which I will cover a little later, aptly demonstrate how well this point is recognized.

The social, political, and economic forces which have molded the West have never been static. The scenario and the dialogue are constantly shifting to meet the dynamic needs, desires, and demands of our people. Approaches to conservation, development, and use of our water resources have been, are, and will always be primary factors in the building of our Nation, and, as such, must be dynamic by nature and by determination.
For example, in the last several years, a decisive shift has taken place in national priorities for the use and conservation of our natural resources, particularly in the case of water and related land resources. Under these changing priorities, greater emphasis is now being placed upon critically required municipal and industrial water supply needs, additional energy demands, and water-related environmental or recreational improvements, while less emphasis is being placed on the possible development of new irrigation projects.

This shift in our national priorities can be attributed to a variety of reasons. For one, there is the continuing, strong movement of our rural population to the urban centers. There are also the growing demands on all forms of energy. The new and much more comprehensive Federal and State legislative actions directed at improving water quality throughout the country are also significant factors in the priority shifts.

The use of current discount rates in determining project justifications must also be considered as a part of the changing priorities.

In the specific case of the Bureau of Reclamation, the large backlog of some $6½ billion of potential Federal investment in authorized but unconstructed projects is of major concern as we move to meet the new priority values.

The backlog is a serious problem. We are looking at a number of possibilities for cutting the backlog down to manageable proportions: (1) elimination of backlog projects or projects that, in light of current priorities, are unlikely ever to be constructed, (2) reformulation of projects to reduce costs and meet updated priorities where possible, (3) turning to the States and local interests for financial assistance in project funding either by non-Federal construction of projects or features or by contributions toward construction from whatever sources are available, and (4) postponement of construction of certain project features through staging until such time as they can be accommodated under national budgetary policies.

Future construction on authorized projects here in the Pacific Northwest represents about one-sixth of the $6½ billion total backlog.

Recognizing the rather dramatic changes in national priorities, the Bureau of Reclamation is well along in redirecting its efforts in project planning, construction, and operation. For example, in the planning process, we are looking toward public involvement in proposed developments at the earliest stages of plan formulation. We plan to involve the public in the early planning process rather than to first work out a detailed project plan for submittal for public review and comment. This new procedure should allow us to develop comprehensive
plans which will be both understood and supported by the public from
the initial formulation of the plan. It should also provide important
side-benefits in time and funds by eliminating unnecessary and costly
delays in the later process for official review of proposed project
plans.

A second redirection in our planning effort is noticeable in a
transition to more comprehensive total water management studies. The
new study direction incorporates a much more comprehensive and coor-
dinated view of existing as well as potential developments in relation
to the conservation and use of the water resources of an area.

Another example of our new program emphasis is the IMS or Irri-
gation Management Services Program. That program is designed to assist
farmers in the scheduling, both in timing and amounts of irrigations
to reduce water and fertilizer use while increasing production and
providing more efficient and economic control of drainage problems.
The program was initiated here in the Pacific Northwest in 1969 on
the A & B Irrigation District, Minidoka Project, in southern Idaho.
Last year, it was extended to the Boise Project. We hope to begin a
similar program here in the Umatilla Project area in the very near
future.

In legislation signed recently by the President, the Bureau of
Reclamation's program for the current fiscal year--1974--was funded
at $420,293,000. Activities in the Pacific Northwest account for
$81,595,000 of this total.

Within the total program, we are engaged in some rather out-of-
the-ordinary activities which I believe illustrate the Bureau's
capability to meet the new challenges in the water picture today.

An excellent example of such an activity is Project Skywater--
the weather modification study program the Bureau has had underway
for the past several years. These studies include computer operations
to design practical field models for identifying seedable clouds,
actual field seeding experiments, and evaluation of the results of
cloud seeding. Pilot programs include large-scale testing and verifi-
cation of techniques.

So far, operational-type activities in precipitation management
have been limited to emergency drought situations in Arizona, Texas,
Oklahoma, and Kansas. Coordination with State and local groups has
been an essential part of these projects. Although no solid scientific
evaluation was possible under emergency conditions, the drought was
"broken" during the period of cloud seeding.
Another example is our effort in the geothermal field. The Bureau has drilled two test wells in the Imperial Valley of California which is underlain by more than 1 billion acre-feet of recoverable hot saline liquids. Pilot plants are presently being operated at the site to test desalting processes. Although we are interested both in the water and power aspects of potential geothermal development, we are confining our activities to the water side and are leaving the power aspect to others for exploration.

We now have underway a 10-year program to develop plans to control the rise in salinity concentrations in the Lower Colorado River as the Upper Basin continues to develop uses for its apportioned water under the Colorado River Compact. In addition, the Bureau and the Department of the Interior are exploring other approaches to resolving many of the complex problems of the Colorado River Basin.

The Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968 authorized the Western U.S. Water Plan. That study in which the Bureau is taking a lead role will provide a critical analysis of problems in the planning, development and management of water resources throughout the West. Completion of the study is scheduled for next June, and will make available to the Western States, Congress, and the Administration, information that will assist in making needed decisions on land and water programs.

Now, let's take a brief look at the Bureau's program here in the State of Oregon. The program for the current fiscal year totals $8,270,000. This includes funding provided in the recent Public Works legislation, advances from water users, and funds carried over from last year. Construction and rehabilitation accounts for $7,649,000 of the total; operation and maintenance $138,000; and general investigations $483,000.

The major construction item, of course, is for the Tualatin Project, which is located adjacent to metropolitan Portland.

That project, which is estimated to cost about $41 million, is essentially a program to provide a water supply to meet the pressing needs of several communities for additional municipal and industrial water, irrigation service to about 17,000 acres, water-quality control, and flood control, as well as recreation and fish and wildlife benefits. Initial construction on the project began in 1971 and in 1972 a contract was awarded to Peter Kiewit Sons, Inc., for construction of the Scoggins Dam, the principal project feature. Work on Scoggins Dam, now about 60 percent complete, is scheduled to be finished by January 1975. First storage is planned to begin in the fall of 1974, with the overall project scheduled to be completed by the spring of 1979. The Tualatin Valley Irrigation District will assume the responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the irrigation facilities.
as they are completed and placed in service. It is expected that Washington County will be responsible for the administration of the recreational facilities which are to be constructed at Henry Hagg Lake, the reservoir for Scoggins Dam. It is interesting to note also that negotiations are presently underway with the City of Hillsboro for an agreement under which the City would fund the construction of the Spring Hill Pumping Plant as a combined municipal and industrial water and irrigation facility.

The Fiscal Year 1974 program also includes funding for the Tumalo Irrigation District to begin its replacement of deteriorated flumes. It is anticipated that the irrigation district will begin preparation of designs and specifications next spring leading to award of a construction contract in Fiscal Year 1975.

Funds are also provided to allow the Medford and Rogue River Valley Irrigation Districts to continue rehabilitation of a cascade canal to reduce critical water losses between Fourmile and Fish Lake storage reservoirs.

A write-in to the original appropriations legislation makes funds available to the Ochoco Irrigation District to begin replacement of open laterals and drains on the project with buried pipe.

Funds are also available for us either to continue or to begin construction of recreational facilities on a number of existing reservoirs throughout the Pacific Northwest under cost-sharing agreements in line with Public Law 89-72.

Of major interest as we look to the future is that advance planning on the Merlin Division of the Rogue River Basin Project is now underway. The Merlin Division, located in Josephine County, was authorized in May 1970. The major facility of the Merlin Division will be Sexton Dam and Reservoir located on Jumpoff Joe Creek about 8 miles north of Grants Pass. Because of changes in national priorities and local needs, the plan of development as envisioned in the original report will have to be changed considerably. The report envisioned the Merlin Division as more or less a typical irrigation project with associated recreation benefits. More recently, as the project area is converting to a suburban-type development with land ownerships generally consisting of 2 to 10 acres, the local people have expressed a greater need for domestic and municipal water, recreation and fishery enhancement, and less emphasis on irrigated agriculture.

We are presently making studies to revise the plan to meet the national priorities and the needs of the local people. We expect these studies to be completed and a final plan developed by the end of 1975. If funds are made available, construction work can commence shortly thereafter.
In addition to the Bureau works I've described, our general investigations program in Oregon involves seven feasibility studies.

Our joint special report with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife on anadromous fish passage improvements at Savage Rapids Dam, Grants Pass Division of the Rogue River Basin Project, is essentially complete and ready for submittal to our headquarters offices in Washington, D.C. The proposed measures would be interim actions to reduce fish losses at the dam and allow the fish to pass more efficiently with fewer injuries. We expect the second part of the study to get underway this year to consider all water related problems and needs of the Grants Pass area and resolve the fish passage problem on a permanent basis. This study is scheduled for completion in 1976.

Reformulation studies under the new planning guidelines are underway on the Carlton Division of the Willamette River Project. Alternative plans are being identified to serve the needs of fish and wildlife conservation, recreation, municipal and industrial water supplies, flood control, and irrigation. This study is scheduled to be completed by the end of calendar year 1973.

In the Umatilla Basin study, we are evaluating opportunities for increasing water supplies and achieving water savings to meet critical basin needs. The study is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1974. Some major objectives are to supplement irrigation water supplies; provide municipal and industrial water to Pendleton; reestablish salmon runs; create new recreation opportunities; and achieve added protection against flooding. Opportunities for achieving development of water and related resources on the Umatilla Indian Reservation will also be explored.

Feasibility studies are continuing on the Second Phase of the Tualatin Project. The initial phase of the multipurpose Tualatin Project, now under construction in Washington County, will meet a part of the identified needs in the Tualatin Basin. Additional multiple-purpose storage could provide for fish and wildlife enhancement, municipal and industrial water supplies, water quality improvement, recreational improvements, flood control, and irrigation. This study should be completed within the next year.

Also, in the Willamette River Project, studies are continuing on the Molalla Division and should be completed by the fall of 1974. In this multipurpose project, alternative plans will be developed for different levels and combinations of project functions, including fish and wildlife enhancement, water-based outdoor recreation, new and supplemental irrigation, flood control, municipal and industrial water supplies, hydropower production, and water quality improvement.
A reanalysis using the new multiple objective planning guidelines is currently being made of the proposed Medford Division, Rogue River Basin Project. Completion of the reanalysis is scheduled during the current fiscal year. The reanalysis places emphasis on the national economic development and environmental quality aspects of the project rather than the more local impacts.

In the Walla Walla River Basin, prospects are being explored for regulation of basin streams and for importation of water into the basin from the Columbia River to meet multiple purposes. Public works groups have been formed to assist in identifying viable plans for conservation and development of water and related resources in the basin. A report on these activities is scheduled for completion during the winter of 1975.

Although actually in Washington, our program on the Touchet Division of the Walla Walla Project will have a distinct impact on the northeastern portion of Oregon.

The Touchet Division was authorized in July 1970. Funds to begin advance planning work were made available in the spring of 1973. The major facility of the Touchet Division will be Dayton Dam and Reservoir located on the East Fork of Touchet River about 4 miles upstream from the City of Dayton. The reservoir with a capacity of 52,600 acre-feet will fully develop the water resources at the Dayton site and provide adequate water to meet the present and immediate future requirements for irrigation, fish and wildlife, municipal and industrial water, flood control, and recreation.

Advance planning studies are now underway on the final plan of development with a report scheduled to be completed at the end of 1974. If funds are made available, construction work could commence shortly thereafter.

This brief discussion of some of our general activities and of our current program in the Pacific Northwest certainly indicates that the Bureau's horizons are continuing to expand. As the problems of conservation and use of our water and related land resources grow more complex, the need for informed understanding of the various factors which bring about the problems and for cooperative action toward mutually acceptable solutions becomes more critical also. I promise you that the Bureau of Reclamation stands ready, willing, able, and anxious to work with the Oregon Water Resources Congress and all others to assure the wise use and conservation of our water and land resources.