Statement of Gilbert Stamm, Commissioner - Bureau of Reclamation, witness for the Department of the Interior before the Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources, House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee on H. R. 589, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide relief to the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District due to delivery of water to the Santa Ynez Indian Reservation lands, June 5, 1975.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. We are appearing before this Committee to present the Administration's views on H. R. 589, which would provide relief to the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District for the cost of the part of its distribution system that is used for delivery of water to the Santa Ynez Indian Reservation lands. The Administration recommends the bill not be enacted. The Administration feels this is a matter to be settled between the district and the tribe. The contract between the district and the United States was not qualified in any way to provide for prospective agreements with the tribe, and the Administration feels the contract with the United States should not be changed.

The Santa Ynez Indian Reservation is located within the boundaries of the 10,000-acre Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District. There are some 15 Indian families living on the 88-acre reservation. The district is a member unit of the Santa Barbara County Water Agency, the contracting entity on the Cachuma Project. The project is located near Goleta in southern Santa Barbara County, California. In 1960 the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District entered into a contract with the United States to repay a Small Reclamation Projects loan of about $3,800,000. The loan was used to construct a distribution system which was completed in 1965.
The district is providing water for domestic use by the Indians through a part of the water distribution system constructed with the loan funds. The Indian Health Service, a part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, installed a distribution system within the reservation boundaries about 5 years ago. The district agreed to furnish water to the Indians with the understanding that they would pay the same water service charge as the rest of the district water users. The district also planned at that time to seek legislation which would reduce its loan repayment obligation. The annual tax assessment made against other district lands to pay for the distribution system loan is not possible against the reservation lands because it is federally owned.

The cost of the district's distribution system amounts to approximately $382 per acre over the balance of the repayment period which would be equal to about $33,600 for the 88 acres of Indian land. This is slightly less than 1 percent of the loan, or about $1,120 per year which is the amount the district would be credited under the proposed legislation.

The Santa Ynez Indians have paid and will continue to pay the water service charge directly to the district for project water. This charge is made to recover the district's payment to the United States for water and the Indian's appropriate share of the district's operation and maintenance costs.
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