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DOUBLING OF RECLAMATION MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL WATER DELIVERIES IN FIVE YEARS REFLECTED IN SUBMISSION OF DRAFT LEGISLATION

Delivery of municipal and industrial water by the Bureau of Reclamation in the Western States has nearly doubled in the past five years, the Department of the Interior said today after submitting to Congress proposed legislation to facilitate transfer to municipalities of Federal project works for operation and maintenance.

The suggested bill would amend a 1956 Act which now authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to transfer title to movable property to irrigation districts and water-use organizations, which normally operate irrigation facilities of the Bureau of Reclamation that serve them. If the Act is amended, municipalities would be placed on the same footing as irrigation districts and water-user groups. Property involved in the transfer must be necessary to operation and maintenance of project works and the value of it must be repaid under contract. Typical movable property includes trucks and other vehicles, small cranes, portable pumps, tools, and similar equipment.

"The addition of municipalities to water-user organizations which have traditionally operated completed Reclamation works serving them reflects the heavy increase in our municipal and industrial water-supply operations in recent years," said Commissioner of Reclamation Floyd E. Dominy. "Five years ago we were delivering annually only 789,549 acre-feet of water (257 billion gallons) to contracting entities in 13 States; today we are delivering 1,513,000 acre feet (493 billion gallons) to 91 major contracting entities in 15 States."
The number of people served with Reclamation municipal and industrial water increased 2,047,000 during the five-year period (1958-1963), from 8,451,000 to 10,498,000. In addition, Reclamation projects delivered water for lawns, gardens, and orchards to urbanized areas of the West with a population of 655,410.

Commissioner Dominy said the increase in municipal and industrial water deliveries resulted both from augmented supplies of such water from multipurpose water resource projects and from the relatively recent development of single-purpose projects to obtain urgently needed water supplies for one or more communities.

"As the limited water supplies of the West are stretched out to meet burgeoning demands," he said "more and more cities in the West will have to turn to the Federal Government for help in planning and constructing the large, complex water supply systems needed today."

One project now under construction, the Canadian River development in the Texas Panhandle, for example, will store and deliver water to 11 north Texas cities. The project requires a total investment of $91 million. Under construction are a 228-foot high earthfill dam, 322 miles of pipelines, and 11 pumping plants. More than 90 percent of the Federal investment in the project will be repaid.

Federal Reclamation projects are turned over to qualified water-user organizations for operation and maintenance, both to reduce Federal expenditures and to promote greater economy, efficiency, and local responsibility in project operation.

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