UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

June 4, 1954

Mr. William H. Nelson
Western Slope Editor
The Daily Sentinel
Grand Junction, Colorado

Dear Mr. Nelson:

Secretary Douglas McKay has asked me to write to you with further reference to correspondence we have exchanged regarding the Colorado River Storage Project. Much as the Secretary would have preferred to have written to you on a personal basis, he was more anxious to correct as soon as possible certain information previously used by the Department. Accordingly, he has reluctantly—but he hopes understandably—agreed to the use of this printed letter which he has asked me to send to you.

The comprehensive plan for the development of the Upper Colorado River Basin included a proposal to construct Echo Park and Split Mountain Dams within the Dinosaur National Monument. This Department recommended construction of these dams for various reasons including lesser evaporation losses than at suggested alternative sites. The Department wishes to call to your attention a correction in the evaporation calculation which has previously been used.

On January 18, 1954, Under Secretary Ralph A. Tudor appeared before the Irrigation Subcommittee of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and testified on behalf of the Colorado River Storage Project. On March 9, Under Secretary Tudor advised the Irrigation Subcommittee by letter of certain corrections that had been made by him in his testimony and he particularly advised the Subcommittee that if a high dam should be built at Glen Canyon in place of dams at Echo Park and Split Mountain, the increased losses for evaporation will amount to 70,000 acre-feet per year.

We have since been advised by the Bureau of Reclamation that the figures supplied for both Under Secretary Tudor's original testimony and his letter of March 9 for evaporation from a high Glen Canyon Dam were in error to the extent of an additional 45,000 acre-feet, thus reducing the evaporation advantage to be achieved by the construction of Echo Park and Split Mountain Dams.
This Department has reviewed this change in the evaporation calculation at length to consider the effect on the possibility of substituting a high Glen Canyon Dam for the Echo Park Dam, but, for reasons which were given in Mr. Tudor's testimony and by other witnesses before the Subcommittee, we do not consider such a substitute justifiable.

Under Secretary Tudor's statement submitted to the Subcommittee read as follows:

"Should the Glen Canyon Reservoir water surface be raised to provide this additional storage, it would present serious difficulty of protecting the Rainbow Bridge National Monument. This monument is unique and has no counterpart. Furthermore, the additional storage in this lower elevation area of high evaporation would more than offset the savings of evaporation by elimination of Echo Park. The plan would further concentrate storage in the lower end of the basin and fail to provide the needed river control in the upper sections. The system power output would be reduced by an estimated 285,000 kw. if this plan is adopted."

The revised evaporation calculation has been brought to the attention of the President, the Chairman of the Irrigation Subcommittee of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and other interested Members of Congress.

Sincerely yours,

John G. Marr, Director
Technical Review Staff