UPPER COLORADO NOW LIKELY TO RECEIVE SOME SUPPORT FROM CONSERVATION GROUPS

Washington (Special) -- A number of conservation leaders and groups are likely to work actively in support of the Upper Colorado bill as the result of the decision of the Council of Conservationists, reached Friday, to withdraw opposition to the storage measure.

That is the belief of Howard Zahniser, Washington representative of the Council, an organization of conservation leaders.

"If the features of the bill prove to be good ones, I believe a number of conservation leaders and organizations will be working this year for passage of the bill," Zahniser told the Sentinel. "Speaking personally, I'm awfully happy to be in a position to do what I can to push the measure along. The bill now contains constructive provisos for national park preservation, as well as provisions to conserve water," he said.

He referred to two conservation "safeguards" which Upper Basin Representatives and prospective Senate conference Friday agreed to include in the bill to preserve national parks and monuments. As a result of this action by Upper Basin Congressmen, Zahniser said, "Their agreement removes park preservation as an issue in the Upper Colorado bill," since the controversial Echo Park dam has been dropped from the bill.

"Last year the Council sent letters to all members of Congress announcing the storage project to the Council, the Senate and the House. This year the Council very shortly will send separate letters to all members of Congress announcing the withdrawal of the Council's opposition to the bill."

The letter last year was signed by Zahniser, Ira N. Gabrielson, Citizens' Committee on Natural Resources, and Horace M. Albright, for Conservation. They will be signed by the same men for the same groups this year, according to Zahniser.

In identical letters dated Jan. 23, 1956, the Council officially made its change of stand about the bill publicly known. The letters were sent to Sen. Clinton P. Anderson (D.-N.M.) and Rep. Wayne N. Aspinall (D.-Colo.), chairmen of...
of the Senate and House Irrigation and Reclamation Subcommittee respectively. The letters, which were nearly identical, will be circularized to each Congressional office. Aspinall's letter read as follows:

"Congressmen from the Upper Basin states and prospective Senate conferees have guaranteed the nation's conservationists that the Echo Park dam 'will not be reinserted' into the Upper Colorado bill when it comes up for action in this session of Congress, and the Administration has also reversed its formal stand on this matter and has agreed to drop the Echo Park proposal.

Furthermore, we have now been assured that the following two provisos will be added, in their appropriate places, to HR 3383 when it reaches the floor of the House and that Senator Anderson and other prospective Senate conferees will support the inclusion of these two provisos:

1) Provided, further, that as part of the construction, operation and maintenance of the Glen Canyon unit the Secretary of Interior shall take adequate protective measures to preclude impairment of the Rainbow Bridge National Monument.

2) It is the intention of Congress that no dam or reservoir constructed under the authorization of this act shall be within any national park or monument.

In view of these agreements we no longer oppose this bill. In fact, we also wish to commend the proponents of the project for the addition of these provisos, which we are glad to support as of great positive value to the cause of conservation, for they are a reaffirmation of the national park principle at a time when the National Park System, in the minds of many, is in serious danger.

"We who have led the fight against the Echo Park dam are accordingly pleased to be able to take our present position."

Attempts to arrive at an understanding between Upper Basin Congressmen and conservation leaders intensified after the meeting of the Upper Basin members in Denver Nov. 1. At that meeting the Upper Basin Congressmen adopted a resolution stating that they would not press for inclusion of Echo Park in the bill.
On Nov. 29, after a series of conferences, Interior Secretary Douglas McKay announced that the Administration no longer would advocate construction of Echo Park dam, but would attempt to find an alternate site, outside of Dinosaur National Monument.

After conferences of conservation leaders with Anderson, Aspinall, Sen. Arthur V. Watkins (R.-Utah) and Rep. William A. Dawson (R.-Utah), an agreement was reached by both sides Friday evening. No formal announcement was made by the conservationist group until Monday, however, pending the signature of the letter by Albright in New York. Gabrielson and Zahniser already had signed the letter.

Zahniser commended the Upper Basin Congressmen for their "statesmanshiplike interest" in settling the matter.