STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE STEWART L. UDALL, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, ON BEHALF OF BILLS TO AUTHORIZE THE FRYINGPAN-ARKANSAS PROJECT, COLORADO, 87th CONGRESS, 1st SESSION

Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to appear before the Committee for the purpose of presenting the views of the Department of the Interior and the Administration on this long delayed and urgently needed Reclamation development. Our review of the history of efforts to secure authorization of this project discloses that the matter has been before the Congress more or less continuously since the second session of the 82nd Congress. There have been numerous hearings before this committee in which the physical and engineering aspects of the plan of proposed development have been fully discussed and recorded.

Representatives of the Bureau of Reclamation accompany me to offer additional detailed testimony on the technical aspects of the plan and analyses if desired by the Committee. Accordingly, I will limit my remarks to some general matters.

The Fryingpan-Arkansas Project is a transbasin diversion project which will result in an average increase in Arkansas River Basin water supply of 69,000 acre-feet annually and will permit more effective utilization of approximately 150,000 acre-feet of Arkansas Basin water. Regulation and distribution of this water resource will enable the generation of about 124,000 kilowatts of electric power, furnish about 20,000 acre-feet of municipal and industrial water, and furnish a stabilizing water supply to 280,000 acres of inadequately irrigated land. Fish and wildlife resources will be conserved and developed, and opportunities for outdoor recreation will be created and stimulated. Thus, the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project is a classic example of the development and utilization of our water resources through the multiple-purpose concept. Every major recognized water use function except navigation will be benefited through these proposed works of development. The most recent analysis of costs, benefits, and repayment shows that 90 percent of the original cost will be reimbursable and that about one-half of the total amount will be returned to the Treasury with interest at a rate to be fixed by the legislation. Repayment of the reimbursable costs can be accomplished within the recommended 50-year payout period.

We understand that all areas of disagreement at the local level have been resolved through negotiations among the people and officials of the State of Colorado. This is reflected in approved operating principles to which the Department of the Interior subscribes and which are referred to in the legislation. This meeting of the minds within the State of Colorado has been made possible by
the substitution of Ruedi Dam and Reservoir for the previously proposed but controversial Aspen Dam and Reservoir. Either of these facilities would provide for replacement storage on the Western Slope in Colorado to protect Colorado River Basin water rights. Ruedi Reservoir would serve an additional purpose of regulating water supplies for future beneficial use in the basin of origin and is thus more acceptable to representatives of the diversion and collection area. It is gratifying to report that the additional cost of constructing Ruedi Reservoir, over and above the cost of Aspen Reservoir, is well within the repayment capabilities of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, and there are no apparent difficulties from that standpoint.

The Fryingpan-Arkansas Project has been endorsed by the previous administration, and I welcome the opportunity of presenting the unqualified support of this Administration for the project. We recommend enactment of appropriate authorizing legislation as stated in our report of May 4, 1961.

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