

STATEMENT OF SENATOR HARRY P. CAIN, OF WASHINGTON STATE, IN
SUPPORT OF FUNDS FOR MC NARY DAM AND FOSTER CREEK DAM ON THE
COLUMBIA RIVER, BOTH SELF-LIQUIDATING PROJECTS, AND FOR
CONSIDERATION OF VITAL FLOOD CONTROL AND RIVERS AND HARBORS
PROJECTS. MADE BEFORE THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
ON WAR DEPARTMENT CIVIL FUNCTIONS ON MARCH 15, 1948.

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee: I am appearing before this Senate Appropriations Subcommittee today to discuss several phases of the War Department's Civil Functions, specifically as they concern the Pacific Northwest.

MC NARY DAM

Most prominent among these is McNary Dam, a navigation, reclamation and power project on the Columbia River.

McNary Dam, which is named after the late Senator Charles McNary of Oregon, is located about 300 miles upstream from the mouth of the Columbia River, which, along that distance, divides Washington State and Oregon.

Sale of electricity will provide the largest share of economic benefits, but of great importance is the result that McNary Dam will have in materially benefiting the growing navigation on the river. In addition, the dam will reclaim an estimated 244,000 acres of land. Experts from the Corps of Engineers, and both private and public utility and navigation experts, are appearing before this committee with detailed data which also have helped in determining my own opinion of this project.

We are not asking something for nothing. Scheduled to testify before you are a group of witnesses from the Pacific Northwest who will show you, in black and white, that Bonneville project alone already is five years ahead in its pay-off schedule. Every last one of our projects is either up-to-date or ahead in returning the Government's capital investment. And with interest. And here is another example: Latest figures, all from official audited sources, show that new businesses started in the Northwest to use Columbia River electric power already have paid in taxes to the Federal Treasury more than the entire Government investment to date in Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dams. Taxes received from these new industries total \$310,000,000, compared with \$296,000,000 invested in Coulee and Bonneville. And this is just power; navigation and flood control returns are also high.

Since McNary Dam was authorized in 1945, \$7,575,000 has been made available for planning and initiation of construction. Actual field operations started a year ago.

Thus, this project is not a new undertaking. Funds were approved by this committee last year to place it on a sound continuing basis.

It is my opinion, that to continue this operation on such a sound basis, \$40,000,000 is needed. Thirty million is not sufficient to permit a start at this time on the important powerhouse structure, and failure to do this would result in a delay in the initial delivery of power---important from a pay-off standpoint---until late in 1954. A total of \$40,000,000 appropriated now would assure power at a practicable date to meet the increasingly alarming power shortage. A study of the pay-off of this self-liquidating project shows it to be highly feasible from an investment and business standpoint.

The development of McNary Dam is a necessary component of the great Columbia River Basin.

FOSTER CREEK DAM

We need it now. The nation needs it; the defense potentialities of the great navigation-power-reclamation projects of the West already have been demonstrated by past operations; and coupled with McNary Dam is one other project, whose planning is of the utmost importance, and I hope you question, in closed executive session if necessary, the experts from the Corps of Engineers as to its necessity from a defense standpoint.

The second project I mention is Foster Creek Dam, also on the Columbia River. My colleagues and I are asking only for money to complete the planning and preparation; not for construction money. Planning and initial preparation for construction will take a full year and the Corps of Engineers have made it plain that construction could not start before fiscal 1950, even if more funds than we ask were made available.

Work on Foster Creek cannot be postponed if power demands are to be met.

From a defense standpoint, the nation needs it.

This dam also could eventually irrigate an estimated 152,000 acres of rich farm land, now dead for lack of water. Annual floods and washouts would be controlled in the area.

The Foster Creek Damsite is named for a dry wash that sometimes carries flood water from the Big Bend wheatlands of the Northwest. The damsite is at the lower end of a box canyon in the Columbia River and is located about 65 miles downstream from Grand Coulee Dam. Foster Creek is slightly more than a mile upstream from the town of Bridgeport, Washington; and Brewster, Washington, is only 11 miles away. The dam will be more than 200 feet high and 1,628 feet long. When built and operating, the dam will form a still-water pool to within two miles of the tail race of Grand Coulee Dam.

Power at Foster Creek would be handled by fifteen 87,000 horsepower turbines, each to generate 64,000 kilowatts, or a total of more than one million--almost as much as Grand Coulee Dam. According to experts, this power would be the cheapest in the world. This dam would generate more power more efficiently and less costly per dollar invested than any in the world.

Like all multiple purpose projects in Washington State and Oregon, there is no public versus private power operator fight; all private power companies urge this development.

Without Foster Creek and McNary dams the present power shortage in the Pacific Northwest will continue from year to year. New companies wanting to purchase power now have to be turned down.

Foster Creek Dam was first proposed in a now-famous report called the "308 Report" issued in 1932 by the Seattle district Army Engineers. It was the same report that proved that a dam at Grand Coulee was feasible, and it also established potential damsites along the Columbia from Bonneville to Grand Coulee, among which Foster Creek and McNary (formerly known as Umatilla) Dams were cited as particularly promising.

The fishing industry says Foster Creek will not hinder it because Foster Creek Dam is 12 miles above the mouth of the Okanogan River, the northernmost salmon spawning stream.

Every private power company and all engineers have agreed that power demands in the Northwest CANNOT be met on reasonable schedule without Foster Creek. The load forecasts attested to by members of the Northwest Power Pool in the agreement of January 1947, signed at Tacoma, indicate that only a combination of full installation at Grand Coulee, McNary and Foster Creek, as well as Hungry Horse, can meet that demand.

The President's Commission on Air Policy, in its January 1948 report, urged early establishment of aviation research centers (supersonic, etc.) which must be located in an area having large supplies of cheap electricity and water. Only the Northwest can meet that requirement and Foster Creek will meet it cheaply and efficiently.

The current oil shortage in the East and Central States makes conservation of this resource a must. One of the best ways of conserving oil is to substitute water power for oil-steam generation. Foster Creek now could make the greatest single contribution toward that end.

Foster Creek Dam will flood no farms; it will not cover any mineral deposits and it will destroy no property.

Foster Creek Dam, once completed, can deliver a large block of low-cost power to the Bonneville transmission system WITHOUT COSTLY LINE CONSTRUCTION.

The construction of this dam would result in new wealth and additional revenue in property and income taxes. This is an investment, not an expenditure.

If a real news flash came over the wires today reporting the discovery of an oil field, platinum or uranium ore near Central or Eastern Washington, many of us would rush to stake out a claim. Yet, there in the Columbia Basin is wealth greater than any of this. It is the wealth of hydro-electric power that is at present going to waste down the Columbia River and out into the Pacific Ocean. Here is electric power, flood control, navigation needs, and farm land needing water to make it rich awaiting investment by the Government. This investment will be repaid with interest.

Cheap electricity and plenty of it is one of the greatest home builders in America.

I ask no money for construction of this project, only funds to complete the advance planning for which you have previously appropriated \$600,000. Needed now, in addition to the sum recommended in the President's budget, is \$975,000 more for advance planning, and \$3,300,000 to complete all final stages of work, including access roads, an access bridge, and a field office.

Mr. Chairman, at this point I would like to submit as a part of the record a letter from the Okanogan, Washington, Chamber of Commerce; a copy of a letter to General Raymond A. Wheeler, Chief of Army Engineers, from E. R. Hoffman, Superintendent of lighting for the City of Seattle; a telegram from Clifford E. Davis, president of the Brewster, Washington, Commercial Club; a telegram from the Gamble Lumber Company of Brewster, Washington; a telegram from C. A. Erdahl, Commissioner of Public Utilities for the City of Tacoma, Washington--all dealing with Foster Creek Dam.

Mr. Chairman, the 1944 Flood Control Act authorized a project for the Palouse River at Colfax, Washington, for enlargement of a channel and levee work. This river runs through the center of this important city of Washington State. Less than three weeks ago this river burst its banks and flooded the city. Water stood four feet deep in the business district and caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. Immediate relief is asked and the Corps of Engineers reports that \$480,000 is needed for this project.

I ask to have inserted in the record an Associated Press dispatch from Pullman, Washington of February 27, which appeared in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, describing the flood conditions in Colfax. I also ask that a telegram from R. S. Owen, Mayor of the City of Colfax, be made part of this record.

There are four other authorized Rivers and Harbors projects in Washington State needing your attention.

The first is for Olympia Harbor, with \$187,000 estimated as the amount needed to dredge additional width in the turning basin at the port docks. The important factor in this project is Olympia's strategic position in relation to Fort Lewis, Washington, one of the major permanent training establishments of the nation. During the First and Second World Wars, it trained several million men for army service. A large proportion of these men, and thousands of pounds of equipment, embarked for overseas assignment from the Port of Olympia.

The second authorized project is for the Columbia River and Lower Willamette River below Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. For this work, \$929,000 is asked. It includes two projects--one, a dredging project at the docks at Longview; and the second, a fish base at Astoria, Oregon. Both projects are in the request made by the Army Engineers and approved by the Bureau of the Budget. The Port of Longview needs \$152,000 as channel conditions at lumber docks there are so bad that one lumber company expended \$50,000 of its own funds in the hope your committee would complete the job.

The third authorized project is a small one for dredging work at the mouth of the Cowlitz River and the final project is one for Willapa Harbor, known as the Bay Center Channel project, authorized by the 76th Congress. It requires, according to the latest estimates, between \$60,000 and \$74,000 to complete. At this point I wish to have made part of the record a telegram from L. D. Williams, Jr., of the Port of Willapa Harbor.

In Walla Walla, Washington, there is a flood control project known as Mill Creek. It was authorized in the Flood Control Act of 1938 and provides for the construction of a storage dam, outlet works, and the improvement of part of the Mill Creek Channel which runs through this thriving city. The entire project is about 60 per cent complete.

The remaining portion of this project consists of completing the channel paving work in Mill Creek within the city. Walla Walla is constantly endangered by floods caused by this creek. The necessary equipment and facilities to finish this job are on the site and I am satisfied as to the urgency for \$765,000 to help this City of 30,000 persons.

In support of this project, Mr. Chairman, I submit for the record a letter from Arthur E. Cox, chairman of the Mill Creek Flood Control District, Walla Walla, Washington.

Thank you for your consideration.