

STATEMENT OF JOHN RICHARDSON, SECRETARY, COLUMBIA BASIN COMMISSION, AND  
SUPERVISOR OF RECLAMATION, DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, STATE OF WASHINGTON,  
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATIONS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS, MAY 6, 1959.

Mr. Chairman:

My name is John Richardson. I am Secretary of the Columbia Basin Commission and supervisor of the division of reclamation, Department of Conservation, of the State of Washington.

I would first like to report that a great deal of progress has been made since a year ago on the negotiation of a new repayment contract by the three irrigation districts in the Columbia Basin Project and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Today, the irrigation district boards have agreed to an increase of the water users' repayment from the existing \$85 per acre over 40 years to \$125 per acre, over 50 years. The Bureau of Reclamation proposes a 50-year contract at \$133.50 per acre. In both cases, the cost of construction of project drainage facilities would be capitalized in the construction costs.

As you know, the estimate for drainage costs now stands at \$44,500,000, compared with \$8,176,000 provided for drainage of the 1,029,000-acre project in the original contract which was signed in 1945.

The position of the irrigation district boards at \$125 per acre and that of the Bureau, \$133.50, is the closest that the two sides have been since the repayment subject was first brought up in November, 1953.

Any new contract will have to be submitted to the water users for approval. The irrigation boards believe that the increase from \$85 to \$125 per acre is as far as the project settlers will go and still return a favorable vote on the contract.

An important factor in obtaining a favorable vote is the provision in both proposals to start the repayment out at \$1.50 per acre, compared with \$2.12 per acre in the existing contract. The \$1.50 payment would be increased each five-year period by steps of thirty cents and then twenty cents until \$3 per acre is reached, in the program proposed by the irrigation districts. The Bureau of Reclamation plan would provide for greater increments early in the program to a total of \$3.30 per acre.

Since the President's budget was prepared, the Wahluke Slope area of some 61,000 irrigable acres, has been returned to the project for irrigation development by the Atomic Energy Commission.



We are advised by the Bureau of Reclamation that a change in project development plans to take the Wahluke Slope in to consideration will not necessarily mean an increase in the President's budget request for construction of \$8,000,000. We understand that the department witnesses presented a number of alternative plans to the committee. An \$8,000,000 appropriation would bring water to 20,000 new acres in fiscal 1960; 6,800 acres in 1961; 12,100 acres in 1962 and 8,800 acres in 1963.

These new additions of acreage are substantially below the past few years, but would bring in the maximum amount under the \$281,000,000 construction ceiling in the existing repayment contract.

On the project, the 1957 changes in the land limitations seem to be very beneficial. A large number of settlers are farming two units this year, as permitted by the upward revision in ownership to 320 acres per family, or 160 acres for an individual, compared with the previous limit of one unit per settler.

There is an increase in the number of farms and interest in the project locally has increased with the upward revision of land holdings. The change in land limits also has aided the local production credit situation, as settlers are able to make better economic utilization of their farm equipment investment.

Compliance with project water delivery regulations and leasing requirements is good. All in all, we believe that the easing of land ownership limits has been very beneficial.

We also wish to support the budget request of \$5,102,000. for operations and maintenance on the project. Some of these costs are increasing, but generally this amount reflects the growth of the project with 410,000 acres now having water service available.

For other activities of the Bureau of Reclamation in the state, we wish to support the budget requests for construction on the Roza Project, \$288,000; rehabilitation on the Sunnyside Project, \$112,300 and the Tieton Project, \$135,000; and the operation and maintenance funds for the Yakima Project \$154,000.

We also wish to support the budget request for Bureau-wide funds for general investigations, portions of which will be applied in various locations in the State of Washington.



We especially wish to urge the committee to provide funds for the beginning of construction of the four authorized units of the Greater Wenatchee Division of the Chief Joseph Project. As you know, the committee included an item of \$60,000 for the completion of planning on this project in the bill passed by the House a year ago.

The Senate approved a lump-sum item for a number of planning appropriations in Region One of the Bureau of Reclamation for fiscal 1959. We understand that since the \$60,000 provided by the House was not specifically designated in the appropriation bill which came out of conference this sum was not available for use in completing the planning on the Greater Wenatchee Project. Thus, the project was not included in the President's budget this year due to the policy against new starts.

Greater Wenatchee has a benefit-to-cost ratio over 50 years of 5.39 to 1, which we understand is one of the highest benefit-to-cost ratios for an irrigation project to come before the Congress in many years. Rocky Reach Dam, now under construction, and Wells Dam, in the planning stage, will take more than 2,500 acres of orchard lands out of production in the Wenatchee area. Additional acreage is being lost each year to industrial uses and urban development and highways in the area.

The four authorized units total 8,660 acres, of which 6,221 acres are of lands not now served with water.

We wish to urge that the committee place \$750,000 in construction funds in the fiscal year 1960 budget so that Greater Wenatchee will not be delayed further. This amount is based on the size of the project and what has been accomplished to date in creating a single irrigation district for the four units and progress made on negotiating a repayment contract.

On the projects of the Army Corps of Engineers affecting the State of Washington, we support the budget requests for The Dalles Dam, \$7,000,000, and Chief Joseph Dam \$1,100,000. We wish to urge an increase in the Howard A. Hanson Flood Control Project (formerly Eagle Gorge Dam) from \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000. The budget request for the 27-foot channel between Vancouver, Washington, and the Dalles is \$1,611,000. We understand that the Corps of Engineers could well use \$1,700,000, which would bring this navigation work substantially to completion.



The budget request for the Lower Columbia Fish Sanctuary Program is \$1,200,000 for construction funds and \$1,750,000 for operation and maintenance.

Since the budget was presented to the Congress, the Fisheries Subcommittee of the Columbia Basin Inter-Agency Committee has submitted a priority research program for fish and dams in the Columbia River Basin. This proposal, dated February 11, 1959, recommends that an appropriation of \$700,000 be provided for fiscal 1960, in addition to the construction funds for the Lower Columbia River Fish Sanctuary in the budget request.

It contemplates research and development in lake and artificial impoundments for fish farming and pond rearing of salmon and anadromous trout. It also encompasses studies for the passage of upstream migrant fish over dams, downstream migrants, predator control and increased hatchery efficiency. The Fisheries Department of the State of Washington, in a program less than two years old, has had outstanding success in the rearing of salmon in ponds and estuaries.

This \$700,000 appropriation also would include expanded studies of the skimmer devices now being tested in Northwest dams for downstream migrating salmon.

We believe that the fish farming studies and the skimmer devices will ultimately assist in solving the conflict between fish and high dams. We wish to urge the committee to give favorable consideration to the request for this additional \$700,000 appropriation for the Lower Columbia Fish Sanctuary program.

In other development of the hydroelectric resources of the Columbia River system, we believe it is vitally important the funds be provided for John Day Dam, so that power from this project will come into the Northwest Power pool on schedule. The President's budget asks \$20,000,000 for John Day, an amount which would delay completion of the project from 1966 to 1967.

In 1966, there will be an estimated firm energy deficiency of 1,317,000 kilowatts in the Northwest power pool.

We wish to urge the committee to provide \$25,000,000 in fiscal year 1960 for John Day. This will avoid one year's slippage in the project construction schedule and will provide 435,000 kilowatts to the Northwest pool in October 1966, which will help meet the estimated firm energy deficiency of



1,317,000 kilowatts. By keeping John Day on schedule, the projects' installed capacity of 1,304,000 kilowatts will be on the line in February, 1968, as scheduled, rather than in February, 1969, as would be the result if the President's budget request is provided.

This committee has acted several times to keep John Day on schedule and we urge that this policy be maintained. A year's delay would mean added interest charges which would have to be repaid by the power users of the Northwest and higher construction costs, as well as a delay in the extension of slackwater navigation facilities on the Columbia.

In the same light, we would suggest an appropriation of \$34,000,000 for Ice Harbor Dam, an increase of \$2,000,000 over the President's request.

On the three Lower Snake River Projects, the budget request for planning funds recommends only that \$800,000 be provided for Lower Monumental Dam.

We wish to urge that this amount be increased to \$900,000 and that Little Goose and Lower Granite Dams, for which no planning funds are requested, each receive \$500,000. The full value of development of the Lower Snake for power and navigation purposes can best be realized if these three projects are developed concurrently, both as to planning and construction. As at John Day and Ice Harbor, there can be no return to the U.S. Treasury from these investments until power is on the line.

As you know, revenues from the sales of power during the first 20 years of the operation of the Bonneville Power Administration were nearly \$600,000,000. By 1963, this total will reach the billion dollar mark, according to Bonneville estimates.

These revenues have been more than enough to meet all expenses including operation, maintenance, interest and repayment of the power investment in the dams and the power transmission facilities.

We in the State of Washington are proud of our state's contribution to the success of the Bonneville program. For example, in calendar year 1958, Bonneville Power Administration revenues totaled \$63,917,753.

The power consumers of the State of Washington, farmers, home owners, small business, industrial and other users, paid in approximately \$41,000,000 of Bonneville's total revenues. This was 64 per cent of the system's total.



Page 6.

It came from the customers of the private utilities, the public utility districts, the rural electric cooperatives, the industrial plants and installations in the State of Washington.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before the committee.

(end)