

From the Office of
Rep. Craig Hosmer (R-Calif.)

FOR RELEASE: 2 P.M. (PST)
TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 1967

CONG. HOSMER URGES WESTERN
WATER PLANNING COOPERATION

WENATCHEE, Wash., March 7--Rep. Craig Hosmer (R-Calif.) today urged water leaders of the Pacific Northwest and the Colorado River Basin states to join in a "truly Western regional approach" to water resources planning.

"Planning for a Pacific-Intermountain West empire will challenge engineering talent and ingenuity, the skills of economists and the political astuteness of all concerned," he said, "but the rewards, to all sections, will be commensurate."

In a speech prepared for the Columbia River Conservation Congress here, Rep. Hosmer emphasized that "I am not looking down a one-way street in promoting and endorsing an inter-basin water transfer study. We know that the states of the Northwest have special demands for water...and we realize that their other needs will increase..."

However, he added, "the kind of study I envision contemplates a truly Western regional approach encompassing the area from Canada to Mexico and from the East slope of the Rockies to the Pacific Ocean. This is a region of tremendous natural abundance, covering 28 per cent of the total land area of continental America."

The veteran lawmaker, ranking California Republican on the House Interior Committee, was a member of an afternoon panel on "A Southwest Look at Northwest Water." The two-day water meeting (at the Cascadian Hotel) is sponsored by the Wenatchee Daily World.

Rep. Hosmer pointed out that "much of the area involved, especially in the Northwest, is still 'new' with respect to potential use of its water resources and so is adaptable to multiple-purpose development without too much disruption of established land uses. Therefore, with a truly cooperative planning effort and an honest evaluation of all its assets and needs, we can avoid the errors of Topsy-like growth."

"We in the Southwest are not so fortunate," he said. "Too many people are now dependent on decisions that are literally set in concrete." Hosmer explained that the dwindling Colorado River actually has an annual deficit of 2.5 million to 4.5 million acre-feet, instead of the 4 million acre-foot surplus erroneously estimated in 1922 when the seven-state Colorado River Compact was drawn up.

In addition to quantitative deficiencies, he continued, the excessive salinity of the Colorado is causing a serious quality problem. He called attention to an Interior Department report stating that salt pollution poses the greatest threat to the drinking water of the seven Basin states and has already reached public health limitations in some parts of Utah and New Mexico.

All these factors, Hosmer said, make a major water augmentation program vitally essential. However, he added, "the point bears re-emphasizing that the responsible, representative voices of the Southwest desire only a fair, impartial study. When we talk of Northwest water, we do so in terms of that which might prove to be clearly surplus to this Basin's long-range needs by a wide margin. The protection of areas

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of origin which we have proposed, and still do, is ironclad and sacrosanct."

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For Release: 2 p.m. (PST)
Tuesday, March 7, 1967

Text of Remarks by
U. S. Representative Craig Hosmer
at the Columbia River Conservation Congress
Cascadian Hotel, Wenatchee, Wash.
March 7, 1967

Mr. Chairman, friends of the Columbia River Conservation Congress, ladies and gentlemen.

When Mr. Kimm extended his invitation, he suggested that I discuss the water problems of the Southwest. Nobody would be happier than I if there were no problems at all to discuss, especially those of water deficiency. But since they do exist, and on a grand scale where I live, and since no amount of wishful thinking will make them go away, there happens to be ample material for discussion. I will attempt to cover the major, salient issues within reasonable limits.

I was happy to accept the invitation for two inter-related reasons. First, although much has been said and written about the rapidly deteriorating capacity of the Colorado River to satisfy the demands of the seven Basin states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming), I do not believe that the serious nature and depth of the situation is yet fully understood or appreciated--here or elsewhere.

The second reason why I jumped at the chance to come across the continent to Wenatchee is just plain old curiosity. Last fall I saw an editorial in one of your leading Northwest newspapers which suggested that the Columbia

was in such sorry shape that some of the big powerplants along the river might have to shut down for lack of water. My first reaction was that the editorial writer was confusing the Columbia with the Colorado because a few months earlier I read a statement by your fine young Governor, Dan Evans, that the Columbia feeds the Pacific Ocean at the fantastic rate of 6.8 billion gallons an hour. Well, naturally, I just had to come and see for myself which story was right. And now having seen that truly magnificent waterway first hand, I can reassure you on one matter--you are in no danger of being declared a water disaster area.

We in the Pacific Southwest think the Northwest has enough surplus water to justify at least a reconnaissance of diversion possibilities and some of your spokesmen say we are in error. They say that the Columbia River is barely able to keep the Bonneville generators spinning the year round. Yet we read full-page newspaper advertisements beckoning thirsty industries to share your water largesse. We say that the Southwest needs help to avoid an inevitable supply-demand crisis. You reply that we're wasteful and crying "wolf."

That, of course, may be true though I've yet to hear a really good reason why. By the same token, it is entirely possible, I suppose, that a trans-basin diversion might not prove feasible and the Southwest will have to look elsewhere for water supply augmentation. Nonetheless, the point is that here we apparently have a region of plenty adjoining a region of apparent water poverty and that to me is sufficient base upon which meaningful discussions can

be conducted among reasonable individuals.

However, there is an obvious prerequisite to discussion. It will be impossible to agree on even an agenda of negotiation unless we clear away all the suspicion, distrust and emotional provincialism which emasculate effective communications.

If you do not believe us and we do not believe you, then there is something tragically, fundamentally amiss in our relationship.

Sometimes I wonder if things would be different if we switched positions. Suppose, for a few years, that we in the Southwest were the "haves" and you here in the Northwest were the "have nots."

Nobody can honestly or realistically pre-judge his reactions under conditions he has not experienced but I daresay a bit of turnabout would help clear the air considerably.

Put yourselves in our place facing certain unassailable hardcore truths about presently existing conditions in the Southwest that are begging for immediate study and solution. We believe there are not enough whips in existence to send our people where the water is instead of bringing it to them. We are the thirsty victims of the familiar law of supply and demand. In international politics, an imbalance usually precipitates war. In Southwest water affairs, things are about the same. Only now the battlefield has moved indoors to courtrooms and the halls of Congress. Witness the variety of compacts and court decisions which tightly circumscribe our existence.

Foremost among them, inasmuch as it affects all seven states of the Basin, is the Colorado River Compact, written in 1922 on the assumption that the average annual supply of the Colorado River system is approximately 20 million acre-feet. It divided 16 million of this between two groups of states. The Upper Basin (mostly in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico) got 7.5 million acre-feet; the Lower Basin (mostly in Arizona, California, and Nevada) got 8.5 million acre-feet, including one million acre-feet provided in Section III (b) of the Compact. The so-called "Three B" water is the extra water--if it exists--over and above the Basin's basic apportionment of 7.5 million acre-feet. Section III (d) of the Compact requires Upper Division states to deliver 75 million acre-feet every 10 years to the Lower Division.

The same erroneous hydrological estimates were still followed in 1944 when the United States, in a noble World War II gesture, signed a treaty guaranteeing our Mexican neighbors 1.5 million acre-feet annually, about twice as much as they were then using. Article III (c) of the Compact said that Mexico was to be satisfied out of the supposed surplus of 4 million acre-feet. Only if this surplus was inadequate was the Mexican burden to cut into the apportionments to the two basins. In that supposedly unlikely event, each basin was to bear half of the deficiency.

The net effect of the legal allocations under the Compact and the Mexican Treaty add up to a total draft upon the river of 17.5 million acre-feet--and that's not counting about a million acre-feet lost in evaporation and other causes.

On the other hand, the Colorado's average annual flow at Lee Ferry actually turns out to be about 13 to 15 million acre-feet, depending on the years used as a base period. Instead of a 4 million acre-foot surplus, the river actually has a 2.5 million to 4.5 million acre-foot annual deficit.

To further complicate the Colorado's water bankruptcy, along came the Supreme Court decision of 1964 in Arizona vs. California, which held that the tributaries of the Colorado in Arizona and Nevada are not to be included in the Lower Basin pot. So the Court went ahead and allocated 7.5 million directly from the mainstream: To California, 4.4 million acre-feet annually; Arizona, 2.8 million acre-feet, and Nevada, 300,000 acre-feet.

The only reason the Colorado is not now as dry as a bone is that all the Basin states have not fully developed their entitlements. When the Upper Basin projects that have been authorized, and all the presently proposed projects, such as the Central Arizona Project, are constructed, these minimum allocations will be far exceeded. That is why the river is bankrupt.

Now superimpose upon these harsh realities the fact that we are talking about the fastest-growing region of the nation. In southern California alone, which now has a population of about 10 million, compared to about 5.6 million for Washington, Oregon and Idaho, we are now taking approximately 5.1 million acre-feet of Colorado River water a year. Actually, the six California agencies represented on the Colorado River Board of California hold contracts with the Secretary of the Interior for 5.4 million acre-feet.

By 1990, less than 25 years away, while the Northwest's population is expected to grow to possibly 8 million, southern California will have exploded to 17 or 18 million persons. That is a staggering statistic to digest. It is nearly double the present population. And, while it may represent an added potential problem to California, Northwest businessmen can look upon it as something of a bonanza. Our population growth means a vastly expanded market for your produce and products.

Six years ago, the Senate Select Committee on National Water Resources reported that by 1980--only 13 years hence--municipal water systems will be using twice as much water as they were in 1960; the six major water-using industries three times as much; and the electric power utilities, who need water for cooling purposes, four times as much. The nation will require double the amount it now uses just to maintain living standards, to protect health and to develop recreational opportunities.

The Committee concluded that, by the same year 1980, present programs will leave five major river basins, which cover one-fourth of continental United States, without enough water for consumptive uses and pollution control. The Colorado is one of them. The other basins, by Committee definition, are the South Pacific, the Great Basin, the Upper Rio Grande-Pecos River, and the Upper Missouri River.

So, it is simply a question of time--and not much time at that--until the water needs of the Southwest surpass the amount of water available from the Colorado.

It is plain to see from these unadorned facts

that the Southwest is desperately dependent upon substantial augmentation of Colorado River water from some source--and soon. Without supplemental water, first we ration and then we wither.

A moment ago I mentioned pollution control. This is the other side of the quantity-quality coin, the latest specter come to haunt our streams and rivers. Mexico raised it first, complaining of the quality of the Colorado River water that reaches her.

We must quickly develop workable and reasonable quality standards for the interstate waters of the Colorado River System. To do so, full consideration must be given to the numerous factors and variables connected with the control, development, utilization, conservation and protection of the system's water resources. It is evident that future development and utilization of the Basin's water--for expansion of irrigated agriculture, increases in population and industrial growth--will be accompanied by progressive increases in consumptive losses of water and attendant increases in concentrations of dissolved solids.

The combination of cumulative pollutants and dwindling quantity makes a water supply augmentation program that much more compelling. In other words, we're caught in the quality-quantity pinch and it hurts. Unlike some of the Eastern rivers, the Colorado is not the victim of indiscriminate dumping of refuse. Rather, its problem in the main is one of excessive salinity, the by-product of return flow.

It was just a few months ago that the Department of the Interior reported that salt pollution posed the

greatest threat to the drinking water of the seven Basin states. In fact, it was said that salt encroachment has already reached public health limitations in the Duchesne sub-basin of Utah and the San Juan sub-basin of New Mexico. The water the Metropolitan Water District diverts from the Colorado for households and industries on the coastal plain now contains half again as much salt as the Public Health Service standard for drinking water. The towns in Imperial Valley, and along the river, have no other sources whatever to dilute this salinity. Essentially, what is happening is that cities and industry are permanently removing water from the river, but are sending back to it, in return flow from farms, the original content of the unwanted salt.

Responsible officials of the seven states are currently attempting to formulate a set of Basin-wide water quality standards to meet the terms of the Federal Water Quality Act of 1965. Whatever else may be decided, they are unanimously agreed that the anticipated increased uses of water make importation vitally essential. The revitalization of the present water quality of the Lower Colorado River, as contemplated by the guidelines of the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, can only be made practicable by a major water augmentation program.

Having outlined the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the Southwest water picture, let me hasten to emphasize now that I am not looking down a one-way street in promoting and endorsing an inter-basin water transfer study. We know that the states of the Northwest have special demands for water--for salmon fisheries, navigation, power,

et cetera. We realize that their other needs will increase, for such reasons as population growth, waste disposal, municipal and industrial purposes, and cooling of water for giant atomic energy plants.

The kind of study I envision contemplates a truly Western regional approach encompassing the area from Canada to Mexico and from the East slope of the Rockies to the Pacific Ocean. This is a region of tremendous natural abundance, covering 28 per cent of the total land area of continental America.

Planning for a Pacific-Intermountain West empire will challenge engineering talent and ingenuity, the skills of economists and the political astuteness of all concerned. But the rewards, to all sections, will be commensurate.

Much of the area involved, especially in the Northwest, is still "new" with respect to potential use of its water resources and so is adaptable to multiple-purpose development without too much disruption of established land uses. Therefore, with a truly cooperative planning effort and an honest evaluation of all its assets and needs, we can avoid the errors of Topsy-like growth. We in the Southwest are not so fortunate. Too many people are now dependent on decisions that are literally set in concrete.

Despite the need for truly regional plans, I do not want to leave the impression that the Southwest is sitting idly on its hands, just waiting for somebody to dig a Northwest-Southwest water ditch. Californians, for their part, are spending some \$2 billion of their own money on the State Water Project to bring northern water to the dusty

Southland. And that's not taking into account the billion-plus dollars that the Metropolitan Water District and the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power will invest for supplemental connecting works. Add to that the nearly half-billion dollars earmarked for a prototype nuclear desalination plant off the Southern California coast, plus the heavy investment in waste water reclamation projects. These major programs illustrate our initiative and self-help attitude.

Actually, there are localities in the Southwest that have even more pressing and immediate needs for water and therefore my remarks are stated in the context of the entire Southwest. I'm talking water for seven states, not one, or any part of one.

But the alleviation of water shortages is not the only value which would be derived if the Pacific-Intermountain West were to be considered as a single economic unit. By pooling demand and integrating it with the requirements of the areas of abundance, water supplies might be tapped which are much less expensive and much more reliable than the costs of "go it alone" approaches by segments of this region. Lower costs would permit the watering of extensive areas, such as eastern Oregon, that otherwise would be totally incapable of development--and at no additional cost to anyone else. In fact, there could be a reduction in cost to the regional partners.

Economists also point out that there are beneficial "spill-over effects" of large-scale regional water resources development. One is to permit megalopolis-type development. Take the Chicago-New York axis for example. Certainly

New York has not suffered economically because of Chicago's growth, or vice versa. Nor has the great industrial belt between them detracted from the future of either.

Whether a Seattle-San Diego axis and/or a Los Angeles-Phoenix axis will develop remains to be seen. But it appears certain they cannot unless the essential water resources are provided for both ends and a wide band of way points.

I think the point bears re-emphasizing here that the responsible, representative voices of the Southwest desire only a fair, impartial study. When we talk of Northwest water, we do so in terms of that which is clearly surplus to this Basin's long-range needs by a wide margin. The protection of areas of origin which we have proposed, and still do, is ironclad and sacrosanct. We reject any policy that would rob Peter to pay Paul.

Rather, our philosophy is to guarantee that every state, every county and every river valley shall not, arbitrarily and without just compensation, be prevented from seeking an economic destiny at least as satisfactory as it could have been had water exportation not occurred at all.

When we can understand each other's fundamental problems and aspirations, we will have conquered the biggest obstacle to regional water development. Otherwise, we're straining at gnats and swallowing camels.

As a parting thought I would like to quote a prayer that a Congressional chaplain, the late Dr. Peter Marshall, once recited to the House of Representatives. It goes like this:

"May we resolve, God helping us, to be part of the answer and not part of the problem."