

TO: News Editor

FROM:  
Columbia Interstate Compact  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Of vital interest to farmers who depend on irrigation water from the Columbia River and its tributaries is the Columbia River Interstate Compact. The compact is now up for ratification in the Montana, Oregon and Washington legislatures and will be introduced soon in Idaho, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming.

Irrigation has aided the economic development of the Columbia Basin's arid regions, and is now increasing agricultural yields in moister areas. Enactment of the Columbia Interstate Compact would be reassuring to farmers now irrigating more than five million acres of land. The compact not only guarantees water for present use, but assures water rights for future irrigation development programs. At the same time, the compact allows for an adequate water supply at hydroelectric power sites.

Among the large irrigated land areas are the desert tracts along the Snake River and its tributaries in southern Idaho; a nine thousand square mile area in central Washington, which includes the Columbia Basin project; and areas in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Looking ahead, the Columbia Interstate Compact is a safeguard against

future hazards which could result from diverting water out of the Basin. At least three such proposals already have been made. And if nearly nine million acres in the Basin are to be irrigated within the next fifty years, the carrying out of these proposals could impede growth and prosperity in the Basin. The compact requires that unanimous approval of all seven states be given for any water diversion plan.

However, the compact is not an instrument for irrigation interests alone. It provides for the comprehensive development and protection of hydroelectric power, navigation, flood control, pollution, fish and wild life and recreational areas. It would also encourage industrial progress through the wise utilization of water resources.

Resolving water problems pertinent to each of these vital interests is the chief purpose of the compact. It would establish a permanent commission which would collect and report on data relating to water use plans. Both state and federal representatives of the commission would have the opportunity to discuss common problems and seek mutually agreeable solutions.

The present compact is the result of over ten years of study and negotiation. Representatives from all seven basin states signed a draft of the document last October; and 1961 may herald a unique and forward step toward sound water management in the Pacific Northwest.

August 17, 1955  
Release: On Receipt

Details of the Columbia Interstate Compact are reviewed in a new Handbook published by the Columbia Interstate Compact Commission.

The Handbook reviews questions which have arisen concerning the reasons for the negotiation of the Compact, the method by which it was negotiated and its principal provisions. Also available is a short, more technical summary of the Compact called, "The Compact At A Glance".

Copies of the Handbook and the Summary may be secured by writing to H. Calvert Anderson, Executive Secretary, Columbia Interstate Compact Commission, 320 Symons Building, Spokane 4, Washington.

The Columbia Interstate Compact proposes a formal agreement among Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming covering the development of water resources of the Columbia River Basin. It would establish a state appointed permanent Commission to coordinate and carry on overall water resource planning and act as a board of review for all projects proposed for development.

The Compact would establish a priority until the year 2000 for domestic, municipal, irrigation and other consumptive use of water over such non-consumptive uses as navigation, flood control and hydroelectric power production. It would also provide for consideration of the reservation of certain blocks of hydroelectric power to states in which projects are built, and for the stabilization of coordinated operation of the river system.

The Compact also deals with pollution control and conservation of fish and wildlife and recreation resources.

The Compact was ratified in 1955 by legislatures of Idaho, Utah and Nevada. Ratification by Oregon, Montana and Washington and approval by Congress is necessary before it becomes effective. Wyoming may join upon ratification by her legislature.