

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLANNING OF WATER RESOURCES

by

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Only a cursory review of Federal, State, and local programs and budgets is needed to show that the interest, expenditure of effort, and finances in public works are rising rapidly. This is true not only for the areas involving the newer sciences such as nuclear activities and space probing but also in the older fields of transportation and water development. Today I want to show why it was necessary to have a Water Resources Planning Act, designed to cope with some of the problems of this accelerated activity.

The need for a Federal role in water resources development of our nation was recognized early in its history. A direct approach, in which Federal agencies carried out both planning and the construction of the projects, has been used when it seemed technically desirable and constitutionally and politically possible. When conditions were adverse to direct Federal action, the Federal government urged the States to use their powers to take the actions required, supported in varying ways and degrees by Federal aid and guided by Federal criteria.

The 20th Century has seen a dramatic acceleration of activity in the water resources development field. The Reclamation Act of 1902 brought the Department of the Interior into a direct Federal planning and construction responsibility to provide for irrigation of lands in the arid West. Increased flood control legislation was provided to the Corps of Engineers in 1918 and 1927 and, finally, a nationwide flood-control act was passed in 1936. This legislation, together with Public Law 566 enacted in 1954, added the Department of Agriculture to the Federal agencies directly involved with water and related land resources development. In 1920 the Federal Water Power Act was passed, which established the Federal Power Commission to administer and coordinate the hydro power program of the nation. The Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 assigned water development responsibilities to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The new Water Pollution Control Act in 1965 and Clean Waters Act of 1966 provided authority to the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration for pursuing a nationwide program of water quality control. Two years ago the FWPCA was transferred from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and given a subcabinet position in the Department of the Interior. Other recent legislation involving water resources and additional Federal departments include: (1) the Section 701 program of planning grants in the Housing Act of 1954, being administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development; (2) Section 7 of the Transportation Act of 1966 which involves justification of navigation projects and established the Department of Transportation; and (3) the Economic Development Act of 1965 which authorizes the Department of Commerce to make studies in areas of low economic development, including water resources features.

Thus, by 1960 four departments of the Government and the Federal Power Commission had major planning programs in the field of water and related land resources development, and three of these had large construction programs. Subsequently, similar planning programs of three other departments have become significant. The need

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for coordinating these programs became apparent, not only to the Federal establishment but also to the States and to many other non-Federal entities. Also, great concern was voiced by some States over the fact that planning for water-resources development within the sovereign States was being done largely by the Federal government.

In 1959-1960 a United States Senate Select Committee on National Water Resources held hearings throughout the country and prepared a report which has become historically of great significance in the planning program for water resources of our nation. This Committee concluded with the recommendations that the Federal government in cooperation with the States should:

1. Prepare and keep up-to-date plans for comprehensive development for all major river basins.
2. Stimulate more active participation by the States in water planning.
3. Undertake a coordinated scientific research program relating to water resource development.
4. Prepare a biennial assessment of water supply-demand outlook for each water resource region.
5. Improve the efficiency of water development and use.
 - (a) Delineate flood hazard areas and regulate use when that alternative is most efficient.
 - (b) Study water-short areas to minimize adverse effects on economy.
 - (c) Study future needs for reservoir sites and how strategic sites can be preserved.
 - (d) Provide public information and hearings on proposed projects.

Immediately following publication of this Senate Select Committee Report, the first version of the Water Resources Planning Act was introduced into Congress as S. 2246. After four years of study, negotiations, and revisions in which the States took a very active part through the Interstate Conference on Water Problems, the Act was passed in July 1965: P. L. 89-80.

The Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 essentially puts into effect the recommendations of the Senate Select Committee report except for research. This aspect is covered by the Water Resources Research Act of 1964 and also by expanded research programs of the Federal agencies.

The objective of the Water Resources Planning Act is "to provide for the optimum development of the Nation's natural resources through the coordinated planning of water and related land resources, through the establishment of a water resources council and river basin commissions, and by providing financial assistance to the States in order to increase State participation in such planning."

Title 1 of the Act describes the organization of the Council as the Secretaries of those Federal departments and independent agencies that have major responsibility for water resources programs throughout the Nation. The five original members of the Council were the Secretaries of the Interior; Army; Agriculture; and Health, Education and Welfare; and the Chairman of the Federal Power Commission. The Secretary of Transportation was added when the Department of Transportation was formed in October 1966. Also, by decision of the Council in November 1966, the Secretaries of Commerce and of Housing and Urban Development became Associate Members; and the Attorney General and Director, Bureau of the Budget, were invited to be Observers at all of the meetings.

Rules and Regulations call for a meeting of Council Members at least quarterly, to consider major policy and other matters. Representatives of Council Members meet together with the Executive Director at least bi-weekly, to consider policy and other matters delegated to them by the Council of Members.

The Council organization also includes a number of committees: Administrative on Policy, Planning, and State Grants; Technical on Hydrology, Sedimentation, Vector Control, and Economics; and Consultative or Advisory. Also under the Council are four Federal-State River Basin Commissions, five regional inter-agency committees and 13 regional coordinating committees for comprehensive river-basin studies. All of these committees and Commissions have active programs except for the Consultative Committees, which have not yet been formally established.

It is emphasized that the Council is an independent Federal agency responsible to the President. The small staff of 24 positions reports to the Council through its Executive Director. In selecting the staff a balance was sought among professions, Federal agencies' origin, and experience in State or local government, private enterprise, and university teaching and research.

Now, with all this complex and multi-level organization, what are we doing? One of the primary responsibilities, inherited from the Inter-Agency Committee on Water Resources and going back to the Senate Select Committee recommendation, is to provide guidance for making framework studies and to review reports thereon. These studies involve water and related land resources planning for all major river basins in the country. A report on the Ohio River Basin will be the first of such studies to be completed and should be ready for review by the Water Resources Council soon. This should be followed by the Missouri River Basin in 1969, the Upper Mississippi in 1970, and the Columbia River Basin in 1971. The completion of all these framework studies, which will eventually cover the United States, has been scheduled for the mid 70's.

The framework studies will provide population and economic development data for each region including projections to the years 1980, 2000, and 2020; they will also make an assessment of current water supplies and uses, and will relate the available supplies to future demands resulting from projected growth. Alternatives for meeting the shortages and water quality needs and an indication of the urgency of resolving these problems are also part of the framework analysis.

In pursuing a framework study, the normal procedure is to establish a coordinating committee consisting of representatives from each Federal agency and each of the States involved in the area under consideration. A joint plan of study is developed in which study assignments are agreed upon. Throughout the study close collaboration is maintained through periodic meetings. The product is a combined State-Federal plan of water resources development to meet future requirements.

Another major responsibility of the Council is the preparation of a biennial assessment of the adequacy of supplies of water necessary to meet the requirements in each water resource region in the United States. The initial assessment just completed is based on existing inventories and regional studies, and establishes the water situation for a base year, 1965. Assignments for preparing regional chapters of this report were made to the various inter-agency committees and, in some instances, to States. National summaries for each water development or use function were prepared by Council member agencies. Council staff, with assistance from member agencies, performed necessary central staff work and wrote the summary report. Currently, a more fundamental information and analytic system is being developed, to provide the statistics for subsequent biennial revisions of the assessment. It is anticipated that this system will include maintenance of inventories of water resource management organizations; of existing and proposed projects; and of water supply, quality, and requirement data. The first stage of this system will be the development of a river basin model which can be used to determine probabilities of deficiencies and quality requirements in each of some 300 basins in the United States. A second stage will incorporate economic concepts into the definition of supply and demand, allowing an opportunity for trade-offs between various uses of water. The national assessment should eventually become an indispensable tool for comprehensive river basin framework plans as well as State water plans.

Another assignment to the Council under Title I is the preparation of principles, standards, and procedures for all Federal participants in comprehensive regional or river basin planning, and for the formulation and evaluation of Federal water and related land resources projects of all types. In essence, this involves updating, revising, and supplementing Senate Document 97, (87th Congress, 2d Session, 1962), which is a manual on these subjects.

The Council also is working on specific proposals for improved flood plain management. This work stems from a Task Force Report on Flood Control Policy which the President transmitted to the Congress on August 10, 1966 (House Document No. 465, 89th Congress, 2d Session). In this task, consideration is being given to the flood-insurances authorities granted by the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, Title XIII of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968.

Title II of the Water Resources Planning Act authorizes the President to establish river basin commissions at the request of one or more States and with concurrence by the Council. The first commission established under Title II was in the Pacific Northwest, containing those parts of the five northwest States of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming in the Columbia River Basin, plus coastal drainages; others have been established for the New England and Great Lakes regions and for the Souris-Red-Rainy River Basins. The purposes of all Title II commissions will be to coordinate all plans, Federal, State, interstate, local, and non-governmental, for the development of water and related land resources under its jurisdiction; to prepare and keep up to date a comprehensive joint plan for the development of these resources, including evaluation of reasonable alternatives; to recommend long-range priorities for basic data collection, investigation, planning and construction of projects; and to undertake such studies as necessary to prepare the comprehensive plan.

Interest in other commissions has been expressed by States of the Ohio River, the Missouri River Basins, and the Pacific Southwest region.

Title III of the Act provides a basis for increased participation by the States in water and related land resources planning. Matching funds are provided to the States to help develop planning competence which not only will contribute to joint regional plans prepared by river basin commissions or by other coordinated multi-agency effort, but also facilitate a truly comprehensive State water plan. These funds can also be used

to help train and establish a responsible organization of State water resources planning personnel. The response to the State Grant program for this Fiscal Year has been almost unanimous; all but two States are now taking part. The participation for Fiscal Year 1969 promises to be fully as complete. The budget contains \$2.38 million for Federal grants, which will be divided among 51 of the 53 entities defined as States (Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia are included in this program). The Act authorizes \$5,000,000 annually as an annual ceiling for the grant program, which is authorized for continuation over a ten-year period.