

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The Water Resources Research Act of 1964, which I have approved today, fills a vital need.

Abundant, good water is essential to continued economic growth and progress. The Congress has found that we have entered a period in which acute water shortages are hampering our industries, our agriculture, our recreation, and our individual health and happiness.

Assuming a continuation of current practices, by the year 2000 there will not be enough usable water to meet the water requirements of parts of the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

This legislation will help us solve this problem. It will create local centers of water research. It will enlist the intellectual power of universities and research institutes in a nationwide effort to conserve and utilize our water resources for the common benefit. The new centers will be concerned with municipal and regional, as well as with national water problems. Their ready accessibility to state and local officials will permit each problem to be attacked on an individual basis, the only way in which the complex characteristics of each water deficiency can be resolved. The bill contemplates a high degree of interstate cooperation, and I urge that this be encouraged.

In large measure, this legislation is a tribute to the vision and wisdom of Senator Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico. He has long recognized the problems. He developed the program. He guided it through Congress. He has been in the forefront of the effort to see that adequate supplies of water are available in all parts of the nation.

One provision of the bill, however, causes me serious concern, and I request its deletion. The Secretary of the Interior, in administering the program is required, in effect, to obtain the approval of the committees of the House and Senate for each water research grant or contract. Although this legislation is so phrased that it is not technically subject to constitutional objection, it violates the spirit of the constitutional requirement of separation of power between the Executive and Legislative branches. It is both inappropriate and inefficient for committees of the Congress to participate in the award of individual contracts or grants. Apart from the question of the relationship between the Executive and Legislative branches, the delays which would ensue from the suggested procedure would be detrimental to both scientific research and the timely achievement of the important mission of the legislation.

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