

NATIONAL WATER POLICY

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Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Our group was assigned the subject National Water Policy; my report is brief.

Throughout the history of New Mexico, the state has operated to the satisfaction of its citizens without any national water policy. It is the concensus of our group that in the absence of the national water policy, the state and its citizens could continue to operate for the benefit of the state. Should there be established a national water policy, however, our group recommends the following:

- * The states have a primary authority and responsibility for water resources management.
- * The role of the Federal Government should be to provide assistance to the states in the development of programs to meet state needs.
- * State and regional programs should be weighed more on the needs of the state, region, and nation than on the economics involved. Water resources management must be approached in a more comprehensive and coordinated manner at Federal, State, local, and Interstate levels.
- * Federal actions must be consistent with adopted state and interstate water and related land resources plans and programs.
- * There must be continuity, coordination, and flexibility in federal support for water planning and implementation programs.
- * Federal project financing, cost sharing, and cost recovery policies should be reviewed and simplified to eliminate inequities and inherent biases toward specific solutions to water problems and promote equal consideration of structural and non-structural solutions.
- * Water conservation must be the fundamental consideration in all future water management programs.
- * Federally supported water resources research should be expanded and tied closely to the planning and management concerns of the states.

* Any claims to federal reserve water rights, including those for Indians, must be initially addressed within the framework of established state systems.

* We recommend that the Reclamation Act of 1902 be modernized to become a National Reclamation Act of 1978, giving full weight to national needs, farming practices, economics, and the continuation of farming as a way of life in America.

Thank you.