

WATER AND NEW MEXICO'S WELFARE

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Certainly it's an honor and a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to address the Sixteenth Annual Water Conference. I see many people in the audience that I've worked with for many years, and I know of your great interest in our soil and water; and certainly no one is any more aware of the need to conserve our water and to see that it does not become contaminated than I do. I might not know nearly as many of the answers as many of you would know as to what we can or cannot do, in fact I'm sure I don't. But I know of the values, I know that New Mexico depends on how we do handle our water and our other natural resources -- but particularly our water.

As I flew along this morning coming from Santa Fe to Las Cruces, I thought to myself, "Now what would those fine people like to have me address myself to?" I thought a good little bit, and I immediately was reminded of the story of the young man who was asked to deliver the commencement address at a high school in a somewhat rural area. He prepared himself very very well, he went to a great deal of trouble and he had many notes. When he was introduced, he went right into his speech and he knew exactly what he wanted to relate to the listening audience and he got along exceptionally well. He thought to himself, now I've done a real fine job today, I couldn't have done any better. After he had delivered his address and it was all over, not too many people had complimented him on his speech. He was standing out by the door and a farmer from the community came by and the young man said to him, "Say, mister, what did you think of that speech?" And the farmer said, "Oh, I guess it was alright." The young man said, "I thought that was a real good speech, I put a lot of time into it." Then the farmer said, "Well, yeh, it was a good speech, but you didn't say anything that a half or a three-quarter inch rain wouldn't have done a lot more good." So I know that's going to be the way it is with me today. When we have the high winds that we have today, and certainly we do need moisture all over New Mexico, and hopefully we will receive them.

Since the legislature has just completed their work, I thought you would like to have a little bit of my analysis of what the legislature did accomplish and how I felt that we would be able to carry out the on-going programs for the next year. I would say this, we had a very hard working legislative group. They were very dedicated, they worked very long and hard hours. One thing I would like to point out, and I feel very strongly about it, is that 60 days is not sufficient time for studying the many problems we have confronting us in New Mexico and the many areas that the legislature must consider. I think they had 1,000 pieces of legislation introduced that they had to act upon. They certainly tried to give everyone an opportunity, whether they were for or against that particular legislation, to make their thoughts known. In my opinion they did a good job along these lines until about the last 5-6 days. The first 50 some odd

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days, they certainly analyzed the legislation well, and had worked along exceptionally well. And I would like to say that I enjoyed working with the legislature, with the leadership of both houses. I think we had excellent leadership both in the Democratic party and the Republican party. They attempted to keep things moving along as best as they could. But when they realized that there was only about six days left, they had to immediately take action on many of the bills -- either pro or con. That's one thing about being in the legislature, when it comes time to vote, you don't vote "maybe" on these bills -- it has to be either yes or no. And, as we all know, nothing is either black or white. So, there is a certain gray area that you do have to consider. In order to point up the problem, I had received on my desk for signature about 135 pieces of legislation until the last three days of the session. Today I find myself with 230 bills on my desk which were passed in the last three days of the legislative session. So it is impossible to give each piece the individual attention that the legislators would like to give the legislation. Needless to say, some legislation that could pass falls by the wayside from lack of time. And other legislation that probably should not be enacted or probably should not be passed, does pass.

What I am attempting to relate to you is the fact that we should extend our legislative sessions by about 30 days in the odd-numbered years. I think it would be good if we could introduce the legislation the first 30 days and perhaps have a 2-week break to go back to their constituents to see what they think of the legislation that has been introduced, and then come back and have 60 days to complete their work. We attempted to have the time amended in the Constitutional Convention. We advocated 120 days, and then let the legislature decide how they would use the 120 days in the two year period. I think this would be very advantageous and we should at some point in the next 2-3 years, attempt to amend the constitution to where we could do this. The legislators would be able to do a better job of serving the people of New Mexico.

The legislature stayed within the guidelines that I suggested to them -- that we do not have a tax increase, and that we try to live within the amount of revenue that would be available for the 60th fiscal year. I feel that certainly they were able to accomplish this. The public education received 8.2 million dollars of new money, and certainly they could use more, but this was an increase that we will be able to upgrade our public education. There were many other things suggested. I know one thing that I was particularly interested in was a Senate Memorial introduced by the Majority leader, Senator "Tibo" Chavez, that would make evaluation possible in the local school district. They would be working with the State Department of Educational Finance, and with the local governing school boards, and with the interested parents in the community to evaluate exactly what the schools had accomplished. In the areas of institutions of higher learning, I feel that they were treated fairly. And certainly you will be able to continue, Dr. Thomas, with the fine program that you have in operation at New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico and all the other fine institutions of higher learning that we do have. And I want to say that this goes largely -- the thanks should go to Representative Bill O'Donnell for Dona Ana County.

Because he was very insistant that the institutions of higher learning did receive sufficient funds. And I know that many days were very difficult and that many attempts were made to even move back from what the Board of Educational Finance had recommended that they do appropriate for the institutions of higher learning. But after it is completed, I feel that they were taken care of properly.

The other area that comes in for a large proportion, a large percentage, of the appropriations, is the Health and Social Services Department. And they, too, were treated very fairly and received a much larger appropriation than they did in the last fiscal year. And still, all of this was able to be accomplished and stay within the expected revenues. The expected revenues for the 60th fiscal year is \$261.5 million, and the appropriations should run somewhere in the neighborhood of \$268 million. But we had a \$22 million surplus, or expected to have it at the end of the 59th fiscal year, but immediately we set aside \$10 million of this (of which \$8.5 million had already been set aside) for a reserve fund, in the event the revenues did not reach the expectations, we would have \$10 million in reserve, which I think is good. This left us with \$12 million of money left in the general operating funds. This was one thing that was somewhat of a disappointment to me. We found that we did have approximately \$6 million of needed deficits money in order to complete the 59th fiscal year. The legislature appropriated \$242 million, but actually the expenses would amount to about \$248 million, so this was half of the surplus. The other half can be used for the difference between the \$261.5 million and the \$268 million.

There are many things that appropriations were made for, besides the three major areas. It is probably about 15% of the money, but still it is certainly the necessities of the state government. And this is where the executive branch of government does receive its funds, and we did have many things that would be advantageous. The State Police department received increased funds, and certainly they will be able to do a better job to protect you and the rest of New Mexico. We did have a \$100 thousand appropriation for a drug abuse program, which I think is very very good. And there were many other things that we were able to accomplish. One or two that I would like to mention is a \$1 million service tax issue bond that was passed that would make a cancer research facility at the University of New Mexico in conjunciton with the May-son facilities at Los Alamos. And they also appropriated \$100 thousand from the 59th fiscal year fund for the operation of the cancer research center. Another area was the \$1 million that was appropriated for Vocational Education to be used at my discretion, along with federal matching funds. Hopefully, we can improve the Vocational Education aspects in New Mexico. So this is just, very briefly, some of the things that your hard working legislature was able to accomplish.

Now, I would like to give you some of my views about what we do need to do in the area of water and water conservation. Mr. Steve Reynolds, our State Water Engineer, I see is in the crowd this morning. He is much better informed than I am, and certainly we are very proud that he continues the good job that he's done for us for many years in New Mexico

and he will be able to brief you much more as to what we will be attempting to do as the official state government of the state of New Mexico in the area of water. I think the San Juan Trans-continental diversion is working well, and will be advantageous to us in New Mexico. This is the type of thing we should be studying and reviewing to see if we could not have more of this type of project in New Mexico. We need all of the water we have, and we certainly want to see that it is beneficially applied. Much of our water does not produce the maximum benefits for New Mexico. We could certainly do a better job in transporting the water from the high mountain watersheds to the areas such as the Rio Grande Valley, in this area and higher up in the Rio Grande, and the same would go for the Pecos. But we must not ever forget that we must continue to make progress along these lines. Whether it be channeling, or whether it be the eradication of the salt cedar, or other plants that might absorb the water before it does reach the destination. These are things that we must continue to make progress on and continue to work with our state officials and with our national officials in accomplishing the endeavors that we all know we must accomplish. And, of course, I notice glancing over the program, that you will have experts that will be giving you the views of importing other water to New Mexico from the high plains area. We know that this will be drastically needed in the very near future. It's needed now, but in the next 15-20 years, we will have to have more water in the high plains area if we are going to continue at the same level we are now, much less to make progress that we would all like to see made. I think that we should certainly not cease to study the possibility of bringing water from the Pacific Northwest. I know we will run into difficulties, and that it will be expensive, but at least we should continue to study and to make plans to where perhaps we would be able to bring water from these areas into the areas that we do need the water so badly for irrigation, and for industry and the other things that we will be needing water for in the next two or three decades. Certainly we must develop plans for the time when we will need the water as badly as we will be needing in the year 2000, 2020 or later. Of course, we must continue to protect our underground water basin, and to explore it and to see exactly how much reserve we do have in this particular area. This is an area that I'm very familiar with, having farms and ranches in the Estancia Valley area, and irrigating from the underground water basin. This is very feasible, very practical, as long as you have water. If we do deplete the water resources, then certainly we will see a tremendous change in the economy of the areas where we do irrigate from the underground water basin. I will put in the plug for Steve -- whenever he says we have sufficient wells, don't be alarmed, because he's only trying to protect you further down the road. We will continue to conserve our underground basin water, as we will attempt to utilize the present water that we do have.

I think perhaps one area that we do overlook many times, is that the fact that we've not been able to make the progress that I would like to see us make in the area of artificial rainfall and snowfall. I'm sure that in the next decade or so we will see improvements along these lines, and certainly we could increase our snowfall by 20% or so in the high mountain areas -- it would add a great deal to our watershed and to the gallons of water that would be available for beneficial use in New Mexico. The same

would be true if we could increase the rainfall by 10 to 20%. Not only would it assist the water usage, but it would be beneficial to the overall aspects of the economy of New Mexico and particularly the farming and ranching industry. Certainly we should continue to study and work in this area.

Another area that we should continue to work in is the desalinization of our water, our brackish water, we should continue to see if we could develop feasible plans to where we could purify the water to where it could be used in a beneficial manner. These are some of the areas in which we must continue to study to where we will be prepared when the crucial need does arrive. I was happy to see the speaker prior to my address, where he was pointing out the need for keeping our water as pure as possible. We must attract the type of industry that does not draw heavily on our water, that would take tremendous amounts of water, and certainly we want the types of industry to where we could reuse the water, and that it would not be polluted to where it would be unusable in the process. This can be carried out, and we must insist that it is carried out.

I will be working with you and others in New Mexico to see that we do not contaminate our water and that we do keep our streams as clean as we possibly can -- to where we do have the fish and we can use it as recreational water as well. We will have a much higher need for recreational water. I'm happy to be in the area to where we will be having the Cochiti Lake, and many other lakes that we do have in New Mexico. All of these add to the progress that we are able to accomplish to contain our water and to better utilize our water.

In ending, I want to tell you that I certainly do want to work with you; I want to cooperate with you; you are the experts in this area. No one person can be an expert in every area. So the Chief Executive in your state does have to rely on you to make suggestions and to work with our State Engineer and give him the suggestions and he will relate them to me and we will certainly continue to work along with you.

I will close by telling you about a story that does sometimes bring light to the very confusing subjects that we do consider, such as the water problems that we do have. It seems as though there was a church that had received more money than they had to have for the actual operation of the church. They had a little bit of extra funds in the treasury, so they decided that they should buy something a little bit extraordinary for the church. So they had a board meeting, and the pastor said to the board members, "What suggestions do we have to spend the money for something lasting, something that would be real good for the church." They discussed it for a while and came up with several suggestions, and finally it all pretty well boiled down to the suggestion of purchasing a chandelier for the church. All agreed to this, except for one board member. This member, John, sat off to the side, and was adamantly opposed to the purchase of a chandelier. So finally, after a great deal of discussion, he would not move, the pastor stopped and said, "Well, now John, why is it you're so opposed to buying a chandelier for the church?" And John said, "Well, I'll tell you -- in the first place we can't spell it, in the second place, I doubt if we have anyone that could play it, and in the third place, what we need is more light around here."