

## INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Gerald W. Thomas\*

I am particularly pleased to welcome the participants in the 18th Annual New Mexico Water Conference this year. I am pleased for several reasons: (1) Because the Conference represents a cooperative effort among many agencies and organizations as indicated by their broad base of membership on the Advisory Committee listed in the program; (2) I am pleased that the Conference this year is dedicated to a distinguished New Mexico Statesman, the Honorable Senator Clinton P. Anderson, who is being recognized by a resolution of this body; and (3) I am pleased to be here because we are discussing New Mexico's most important resource--Water--and the theme is the Comprehensive State Water Plan.

No conference could have a more significant and timely objective than to have the State Water Plan as a major theme. As this decision takes place, we will all recognize new challenges to conserve the water resource.

The water problem cannot be separated from the energy crisis, from land-use problems, or even from social ills. All of these are inter-related. I had the opportunity recently to attend the National Education Association meeting in Chicago and to hear a discussion of the Club of Rome study which resulted in the book, The Limits of Growth. This is a depressing but potent statistical approach to man and the environment, but perhaps the treatment is too pessimistic.

I believe that there are alternative solutions to our pressing problems relating to man and resources, but only if we can substantially increase our research efforts, if we can step-up our educational programs, and if we properly analyze and understand the various alternatives. The Conference today represents one step toward meeting the challenge as we project our water needs to the year 2020.

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