

PUBLIC WORKS

PLANNING



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DECEMBER - 1936

NATIONAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Reprint of Findings, Recommendations, and
Report of the National Resources Committee**

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PUBLIC WORKS PLANNING

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**REPRINT OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS,
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REPORT OF THE NATIONAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

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NATIONAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

INTERIOR BUILDING

WASHINGTON

December 1, 1936.

The PRESIDENT,
The White House.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

We have the honor to transmit herewith a report of the National Resources Committee on Public Works Planning.

This report recommends a proposed policy for planning, programming, timing, and division of costs of public works. These recommendations are based on special investigations by the Water Resources Committee on drainage basin problems and programs, by the Projects Division of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works on a 6-year program of Federal construction, and by a special research staff on division of costs of public works.

The report on Drainage Basin Problems and Programs, constituting part II of this statement, represents a first attempt through the joint efforts of Federal, State, and local agencies, official and nonofficial, to formulate a national water plan and program. Project lists embodied in that report provide a reservoir of undertakings intended to cover a period of 10 or more years. They have been selected as parts of the ultimate plan of development for the drainage basin in which they are located without reference to Federal or non-Federal financing.

This program should not be regarded as fixed or final. Year by year adjustments in it will be needed in the light of new knowledge, shifting needs, and perhaps altered policies.

The statements on the timing and division of costs of public works emphasize the need (1) for developing a long-time public-works policy, and (2) of relating this policy to business cycles or other crises. Procedures are laid down to avoid some of the past difficulties in the choice of projects, the timing of their construction, and the division of costs. As a means of organizing long-time public-works plans, we suggest:

1. A national development agency or public-works authority.
2. A panel of appraisers under this agency for allocation of costs.
3. A fiscal advisory committee to adjust public-works programs to the national needs for economic stabilization.

Sincerely yours,

HAROLD L. ICKES
Secretary of the Interior, Chairman

HARRY H. WOODRING,
Secretary of War.
HENRY A. WALLACE,
Secretary of Agriculture.
DANIEL C. ROPER,
Secretary of Commerce.
FRANCES PERKINS,
Secretary of Labor.

HARRY L. HOPKINS,
Works Progress Administrator.
FREDERIC A. DELANO.
CHARLES E. MERRIAM.
•
HENRY S. DENNISON.
BEARDSLEY RUMML.

Foreword

The American people, through their various governmental agencies, spent over three billion dollars on public works in 1930. Judging by past experience, it is plausible to assume that some thirty-odd billions of dollars will be expended for the development of our natural resources and for the provision of new facilities during the next 10 years through public-construction enterprises. How can we safeguard the wise investment of this large sum? How can we be sure that projects undertaken by local, State, and Federal agencies fit together into a comprehensive picture or program?

To assist in the formulation of a national public-works policy, the National Resources Committee (National Planning Board of the Public Works Administration 1933-34 and the National Resources Board, 1934-35) has assembled data and prepared studies on a number of the major aspects of the problem. Basing its statements on research reports made for it on *Criteria and Planning for Public Works*, by Russell Van Nest Black, *Public Works in Prosperity and Depression*, by Arthur D. Gayer, and *Economics of Planned Public Works*, by J. Maurice Clark, the National Resources Board in its report of December 1934 summarized the problem and made a series of recommendations.

Further studies in public-works planning, requested by the President, on division of cost and responsibility for public works, a 6-year program of public works, and the drainage-basin study have since led to the preparation of this report which is organized as shown by the accompanying table of contents.

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PUBLIC WORKS PLANNING

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Public Works Planning was published December 1, 1936, and transmitted to the Congress by President Roosevelt on February 3, 1937.

This reprint includes only the Findings, Recommendations, and Part I—Report of the National Resources Committee of that report. The remaining parts of the original document have been reprinted in separate publications as noted below.

Part II.—Drainage Basin Problems and Programs

(Reprinted in "Drainage Basin Problems and Programs—December 1936")

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Part III.—Division of Costs and Responsibility

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