

# The Colorado River

"A NATURAL MENACE BECOMES A NATIONAL RESOURCE"

*Interim Report on the Status of the Investigations  
Authorized To Be Made by the Boulder Canyon  
Project Act and the Boulder Canyon Project  
Adjustment Act*

*Gokhale Institute of  
Politics & Economics*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

J. A. Krug, Secretary

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Michael W. Straus, Commissioner

JULY 1947

# Contents

[In the following text, only those page numbers that are set in *italics* refer to this House Document; those that are set in *Roman* refer to the Departmental Report, which is entitled THE COLORADO RIVER.]

|  | Page         |  | Page         |
|--|--------------|--|--------------|
| LETTERS OF TRANSMITTAL.....  | <i>1</i>     | Water Supply—Continued   |              |
| Letter of July 24, 1947, from the Secretary of the Interior to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, transmitting the interim report..... | <i>1</i>     | Available Water Supply in Upper Basin: Total Water Supply, Water Supply Available for Consumptive Use in Upper Basin, Hold-Over Storage Requirements in Upper Basin..... | <i>33-34</i> |
| Letter of July 23, 1947, from the Director of the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of the Interior, regarding the interim report.....       | <i>1</i>     | Available Water Supply in Lower Basin: Total Water Supply, Water Supply Available in Lower Basin for Consumptive Use in United States.....                               | <i>35</i>    |
| Letter of July 19, 1947, from the Secretary of the Interior to the President, transmitting the interim report and the letters of comment.....    | <i>1</i>     | Quality of Water.....  | <i>36</i>    |
| Letter of July 17, 1947, from the Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, to the Secretary of the Interior, concerning the interim report.....      | <i>2</i>     | Water Requirements.....  | <i>37</i>    |
| COMMENTS OF STATES AND FEDERAL AGENCIES.....   | <i>7</i>     | Erroneous Use of "Stream Depletion" as Basis of Estimates.....   | <i>39</i>    |
| Digest of Comments.....  | <i>7</i>     | Water Requirements in Upper Basin.....   | <i>39</i>    |
| COMMENTS OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA.....  | <i>15</i>    | Water Requirements in Lower Basin: Water Requirements of Existing Projects, Water Deficit in Lower Basin.....  | <i>39-42</i> |
| COMMENTS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.....   | <i>19</i>    | Potential Projects.....  | <i>42</i>    |
| Letter of Director of Public Works.....  | <i>19</i>    | Physical Works.....  | <i>42</i>    |
| Introduction.....  | <i>19</i>    | Water Utilization Studies.....   | <i>45</i>    |
| Colorado River Compact and Relevant Statutes, Decisions, and Instruments.....  | <i>21</i>    | Underground Storage.....   | <i>45</i>    |
| Analysis of Regional Directors' Report.....  | <i>21</i>    | The Silt Problem.....  | <i>45</i>    |
| "Scope and Purpose".....   | <i>22</i>    | Electric Power.....  | <i>47</i>    |
| "Description of Area".....   | <i>23</i>    | Economics of Potential Projects.....   | <i>48</i>    |
| "Problems of the Basin".....   | <i>23</i>    | Review by State Department of Natural Resources.....   | <i>51</i>    |
| "Water Supply".....  | <i>24</i>    | Concluding Comments.....   | <i>51</i>    |
| "Division of Water".....   | <i>25</i>    | Recommendations.....   | <i>52</i>    |
| "Future Development of Water Resources".....   | <i>25</i>    | COMMENTS OF THE STATE OF COLORADO.....   | <i>55</i>    |
| "Potential Projects".....  | <i>26</i>    | Letter of Transmittal.....   | <i>55</i>    |
| "Summary of Annual Benefits and Costs of Potential Projects".....  | <i>27</i>    | Summary of Comments, Views, and Recommendations..  | <i>55</i>    |
| "Extended Benefits to the West and to the Nation".....   | <i>27</i>    | Detailed Views and Recommendations.....  | <i>57</i>    |
| "Reimbursement and Flood Control Allocation".....  | <i>27</i>    | Introduction.....  | <i>57</i>    |
| "Construction Program".....  | <i>28</i>    | Inconsistent Treatment of Areas Outside of Natural Basin.....  | <i>57</i>    |
| "Conclusions".....   | <i>28</i>    | Inconsistent Treatment of Out-Basin Projects in Utah and Colorado.....   | <i>57</i>    |
| "Recommendations".....   | <i>28</i>    | As a Comprehensive Plan for Development the Report Is Incomplete and Misleading.....   | <i>57</i>    |
| Water Supply.....  | <i>28</i>    | Channel Losses in the Upper Basin Must Be Estimated and Used in Computation of Water Supply and Depletions.....  | <i>58</i>    |
| Stream Gaging Stations.....  | <i>29</i>    | Water Supplies and Depletions Should Be Presented in Terms Comparable to Those of the Colorado River Compact.....  | <i>58</i>    |
| Stream Flow.....   | <i>29</i>    |  |              |
| Inadequacy of Estimates in Report.....   | <i>30</i>    |  |              |
| Available Water Supply in Entire Basin: Basis of Estimates, Estimated Available Water Supply.....  | <i>31-32</i> |  |              |

IV

THE COLORADO RIVER

|  | Page  |  | Page |
|--|-------|--|------|
| Detailed Views and Recommendations—Continued             |       | Report in Its Present Form Should Not Be Submitted |      |
| Comprehensive Planning Must Conform to Orderly           |       | for the Approval of the Congress.....              | 64   |
| Construction of Desirable and Justified Projects....     | 59    | Engineering Data.....                              | 64   |
| Joint Action of All Seven States Is Not Necessary to     |       | Discrepancies in Basic Data.....                   | 64   |
| an Allocation of Water.....                              | 59    | Natural Conveyance Losses Above Lees Ferry.....    | 64   |
| In Colorado There May Be No Allocations to Specific      |       | Sources by States of Stream Flow.....              | 65   |
| Projects.....  | 60    | Pasture Land Irrigation.....                       | 65   |
| Controversies Over Contracts for Lake Mead Water         |       | Reservoirs Above Lees Ferry.....                   | 65   |
| Should Be Resolved by the Secretary of the Interior..    | 60    | Colorado River Water Supplies Available in the     |      |
| Initial Stage of Development.....                        | 61    | United States.....                                 | 66   |
| Colorado projects: Paonia project, Pine River extension, |       | COMMENTS OF THE STATE OF NEVADA.....               | 69   |
| La Plata project, Florida project, Dolores               |       | COMMENTS OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO.....           | 71   |
| project, Silt project, Collbran project, Little Snake    |       | COMMENTS OF THE STATE OF UTAH.....                 | 79   |
| development, Investigation of Specific Projects          |       | COMMENTS OF THE STATE OF WYOMING.....              | 83   |
| Recommended by Southwestern Water Conservation           |       | COMMENTS OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT.....                | 89   |
| District.....  | 61-63 | COMMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.....     | 91   |
|  |       | COMMENTS OF THE FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION.....      | 93   |