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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC LANDS AND SURVEYS

R. F. CAMALIER, CLERK

March 25, 1937.

Board of County Commissioners,
Grand County,
Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado.

Gentlemen:

I am in receipt of a copy of resolution adopted by your board in reference to the proposed diversion of waters from the Colorado River to the Eastern Slope. By reason of the fact that I represent the entire State of Colorado, and not any section of it, I am interested in the effect which the carrying out of the Grand Lake diversion would have both upon the eastern and the western slopes of Colorado. The fact that Grand Lake and the proposed reservoirs will be located in your county renders the matter of special interest to you and causes me to be particularly interested in your views in the matter.

I have, therefore, read with care your resolution and should like to respectfully make a few suggestions in reference to it, hoping that if I am in error in any of these suggestions you will advise me, as I am only interested in ascertaining the facts and promoting the welfare of our State.

It occurs to me that the statement in your resolution that the destruction of the lands necessary for the construction of the reservoirs would reduce the assessment of taxable property is correct. As you are of course familiar with the land to be taken, if these reservoirs are constructed, I wonder to what amount your assessments would be reduced and whether in any way by the construction of the project your county might be compensated for this loss.

I have visited the site of the proposed reservoir and have also studied the maps and models which have been made by the Reclamation Service. From this investigation and study it has seemed to me that so far as Grand Lake itself and the summer resort area about it was concerned, it would be greatly improved as a scenic spot if the project were completed and Grand Lake enlarged and the water level stabilized, as the Reclamation Service says would be the result.

I recognize the scenic beauties of Colorado as one of the productive assets of our State and what may be colloquially

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called the "tourist crop" as one of our best crops and one which ought to be developed and encouraged. I am accordingly inclined to oppose any plan to impair the scenic attractions of the State and to support those which would add to them.

You state in your resolution that the construction of the project would have a tendency to pollute the waters of the Lake. As I understand the project, the only water to go into the Lake, either from the streams naturally running into^{it} or from the Colorado River which will then enter the enlarged lake, or from the reservoir by pumping will be mountain water, it is not clear to me how the waters of the Lake would be polluted. While I have less information than you, it seems to me with such information as I have, that the increasing quantity of mountain water coming into the Lake would result in bettering the quality of the waters rather than the reverse.

I am making these suggestions as I have written above for information rather with a view of arguing any differences which may exist between the residents of the western and eastern slopes over this project.

I do not know whether you have had the opportunity to see the final report which has been made by the Reclamation Service upon this project. I have no information as to stream flows or as to irrigated or irrigable areas, but the report of the Reclamation Service asserts that the completion and operation of the diversion project will be of great and lasting benefit to both sides of the Continental Divide in our State.

It is proposed to construct compensatory or replacement reservoirs on the Western Slope which will equalize the flow of water in the Colorado River so as to obviate the period of inadequate water which has occasionally existed on that stream and to maintain an adequate water supply at all times, not only for all of the land now irrigated in the Colorado River Valley but for all land susceptible of practical irrigation in the Valley. These compensatory or replacement reservoirs are to be constructed and permanently maintained at the expense of the water users on the Eastern Slope. There is now flowing across the State line into Utah an average of something over six million acre feet of water per year. It is surely desirable for Colorado to make use of this water if it is possible.

Board of County Commissioners
of Grand County, Colorado

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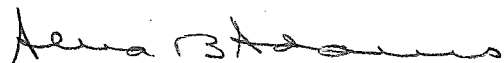
So far as I know, no one has ever consciously advocated a project which did not recognize the prior and paramount right of the Western Slope to all of the water of the Colorado River which it was now using or could put to beneficial agricultural use. I have not and never would support a project which would injure the water rights and water interests of the Western Slope. Statements which have been made to the contrary are utterly, absolutely and in some cases, wantonly false.

I cannot believe that anyone on the Western Slope would prefer to have water, which is not needed in that section of the State, flow down the River to be used by Arizona, California or the Republic of Mexico rather than to be taken across the Continental Divide for the benefit of Colorado citizens. The Reclamation Service report indicates that the Grand Lake project would give great added value to more than six hundred thousand acres of fine land on the Eastern Slope of the Range.

If in the construction of this project should its construction be authorized, injury is done to Grand County in any way, of course, such injury should be either guarded against or adequately compensated.

I hope that the members of your board will find an opportunity to study the report of the Reclamation Service and I shall be very glad to hear from you at any time in reference to this proposed project, or of any other matters of interest to or to your County.

Sincerely yours,



ABA/bhm