



# NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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## Statement of Senator Bob Dole at WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL hearings on proposed principles and standards for planning water and related land resources:

While I fully support efforts to achieve greater economy and more effective implementation for Federal government programs, I view with some concern the December 27, 1971, proposals of the Water Resources Council.

I believe these proposals indicate a drastic new approach to water resource planning that raises serious implications for the entire nation. They demonstrate a short-range, narrow and overly simplified viewpoint which is unsuited to the necessities of our country's future and inappropriate to the Federal government's responsibilities for the protection, preservation and development of these resources as well as for serving the general public.

By proposing an increase in the discount rate from 5-3/8 per cent to 7 per cent these standards establish a bias in favor of projects returning relatively early benefits for costs incurred. The effect of this bias will be to end long-term projects and planning geared to paying extended benefits to large numbers of people and wide areas of the nation. When one of the most frequent criticisms of Federal programs has been the lack of emphasis on the long view and the big picture, I cannot understand this attempt to move in the opposite direction and concentrate on short-range planning and near-term results. The implementation of these standards would stimulate quick-results programs focused in urban areas and all but eliminate large scale water resource programs with fifty and even hundred-year lifetimes which by their very nature are usually located away from metropolitan centers where land and water must be managed if these efforts are to be effective. Although I am concerned that these programs might become over balanced toward urban interests at the expense of rural America, my chief fear is that by becoming preoccupied with "less capital intensive projects scaled mainly to meet near-term needs" the entire nation may some day be faced with water resource crisis of overwhelming proportions because no one looked ahead far enough to see it coming.

These programs cannot be viewed in a narrow or parochial context, for their effects are too widely felt. A dam in North Dakota may mean better crops for the farmer of the region and also better nutrition for a family in Florida. That dam may mean less expensive and more reliable electric power for a worker's home in Minnesota, and it may save a Kansas City factory from being flooded out. Examples for other types of projects are almost endless, but they go to the same point: the benefits of these projects are widespread and significant.

I believe the extensive and highly complex problems of water resource management have recently been victimized by simplistic reasoning in some quarters which tends to equate all resource development with economic and environmental exploitation and sees any reduction in current expenditure levels for these programs as a **net gain for wiser**, more efficient and so-called "better" natural resource management. Nothing could be so simple, nor is it true.

Sound and systematic protection of our natural resources and the environment cannot be achieved by imposing higher discount rates, by establishing new benefit/cost ratios or by reliance upon any other numerical or statistical touchstone. Environmental protection if it is to be effective must take into account the widest possible range of factors and considerations and must be pursued as an element of all government policy --- not just through numbers in one program or one bureau's efforts. Fortunately, the Congress has provided a sound means of assuring the utmost consideration for environmental values in Federal programs by passage of the Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This act, as the courts are proving, contains real and uniform safeguards for the environment, and its features are vastly preferable --- and in the long run will be more effective --- than indiscriminating attacks on Federal projects such as water resource programs with weapons that are unrelated and inappropriate to environmental concerns.

It is my hope that the hearings conducted by the Water Resources Council will afford an ample opportunity for all concerned citizens and organizations to present their views and for the Council to weigh the full implications of its proposals.