

Statement of Jack Garner
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Bureau of Reclamation

On

H.R. 3626
Before the
Subcommittee on Water and Power
Committee on Resources
U.S. House of Representatives

November 9, 2005

Mister Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on H.R. 3626, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the feasibility of enlarging the Arthur V. Watkins Dam. The Administration regrets that it is not possible to support H.R. 3626 in its current form because it contains neither non-federal cost sharing in the study nor an overall Federal cost ceiling.

Arthur V. Watkins Dam, built in 1964, is located twelve miles northwest of Ogden, Utah on the shore of the Great Salt Lake. It is an off-stream structure which extends into the Great Salt Lake and is constructed on lake deposits. The embankment is 14.5 miles long, has a structural height of 36 feet, and contains about 17 million cubic yards of material. It encloses a reservoir of 215,000 acre-feet, with a surface area of more than 9,900 acres.

The original design anticipated settlement of the foundation of the embankment during the life of the dam. In the early 1990's, the embankment was raised, re-establishing the original elevation of the embankment. The project was completed by the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District (WBWCD) under a Rehabilitation and Betterment loan.

The proposed feasibility study would analyze viable alternatives for water storage and consider environmental issues, foundation stability, and public safety. In addition, the feasibility study would evaluate potential future foundation settlement. This study is anticipated to cost no more than \$2 million due to the limited focus of the 1 to 2 foot dam raise.

Arthur V. Watkins Dam forms Willard Bay Reservoir. The dam is a Reclamation feature of the Weber Basin Project and was authorized by Congress in the Weber Basin Project Act of August 29, 1949 (PL 81-273). The Weber Basin Project was constructed in the 1950's.

Growth in the project area has been significant during the last decade. The State population projections for the future show continued growth. With the extensive growth, water development projects and supplies are being investigated for the northern part of the Wasatch Front. The WBWCD has asked Reclamation to provide additional storage in Willard Bay for approximately 10,000 acre-feet of annual yield available under existing Weber Basin Project water rights.

The additional storage of water would be used for municipal and industrial, flood control, fish and wildlife enhancement, and recreation purposes along the Wasatch Front in northern Utah. The added capacity could postpone the need for the State of Utah to begin development of the water resources of the Bear River in northern Utah. The additional storage of water would be consistent with the purposes identified in the authorizing legislation (PL -81-273) and current contracts.

If the legislation were amended to include a reasonable Federal cost ceiling and a minimum of fifty percent non-federal cost-sharing in the financing of the feasibility study, in line with Reclamation policy and practice applied in virtually every similar situation, we would not oppose enactment of H.R. 3626. Of course, we will be happy to work with the bill's sponsor, Representative Bishop, and this Committee to make this improvement. However, any potential authorization to raise the dam would have to compete with the many other Reclamation projects vying for funding.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.