

# **WATER POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE**

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**Final Report to the President  
and to the Congress of the  
United States by the  
National Water Commission**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.  
June 1973**

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NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION

800 N. Quincy Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22203

June 14, 1973

The President  
The White House

The Honorable  
The Speaker of the House  
of Representatives

The Honorable  
The President of the  
Senate

Dear Mr. President:

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Dear Mr. President:

The final report of the National Water Commission is presented herewith in accordance with the provisions of Public Law 90-515, approved September 26, 1968, which established the Commission.

The report contains the Commission's conclusions and recommendations on the policies which it believes the Nation should adopt at this point in its history for the efficient, equitable, and environmentally responsible management of its water resources.

The Commission has examined virtually the entire range of water resources problems facing the Nation, including the effects of water management on the Nation's economy and on its environment and how the differences between these two major objectives can be best resolved. The problems of reconciling Federal and State water law have been addressed, as have the problems of integrating ground water and surface water management. Each of the important purposes for which water is used has been studied, and appropriate policies have been drawn for improving both water-related programs and organizational arrangements. Ways in which existing water supplies can be used more efficiently and present supplies can be augmented have also been examined. Standards by which interbasin transfers of water and other kinds of water projects should be judged have been developed and ways in which water management decisionmaking can be improved have been formulated. The report considers the problems of acquiring basic water data and pursuing research so that management of the Nation's water resources can be more knowledgeably and effectively based. Finally, the financing of future water programs as well as the important question of how and by whom the cost of water programs should be paid are also addressed.

Accompanying the Commission's discussion and conclusions on these and other aspects of water resources are specific recommendations for action at the Federal, State, and local levels. Many of these recommendations would require enactment of new legislation. Some, however, could be accomplished by executive action alone or by action of State and local entities.

The Commission has had the cooperation of and extensive review and comments from all levels of government, from private organizations, and from interested citizens. For this and for the broad range of public participation incident to the preparation of this report, the Commission is grateful. It is particularly appreciative of the cooperation of the Water Resources Council and its constituent agencies for their helpful review and comments. Finally, the Commission acknowledges with gratitude the valuable work of its staff; the research and analysis of universities, firms, public agencies, and individuals who worked for the Commission under contract; and the advice and guidance received from the experts who served the Commission as consultants.

The Commission transmits its final report to you with the earnest hope that it will contribute importantly to the timely and wise solution of America's water resources problems.

Respectfully submitted,

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