

from the CAPITOL

By GOV. GRANT SAWYER



NEVADA AND OTHER WESTERN STATES are experiencing an unprecedented era of growth, but one stark fact clouds our common future: We have already grown beyond our water resources. If we are to continue our progress, long-range regional development of an adequate water supply is a "must."

Recognizing the need for concerted action in the area, the Western Governors' Conference created an 11-state Western States Water Council. The governors realized that if we cannot do this job ourselves, someone else will do it for us; specifically, the federal government. And we certainly will not be able to complain about federal control if it is invited by our own inaction.

The Water Council held its first meeting at Lake Tahoe in August and much progress already has been made. A budget and plan of action is scheduled to be presented to the council in November. Recommendations from the council will be made at the Western Governors' Conference in Nevada next April.

A THREE-POINT PROGRAM has been set up for the professional staff to be employed by the council. It includes:

(1) Development of criteria to be applied by the council in making recommendations, including engineering feasibility, economic feasibility, political responsibility and legal considerations.

(2) Evaluation of the plans and activities of the state and the federal government in developing estimates of water needs and supplies.

(3) A summary of the suggestions for inter-basin diversions of western water and proposed legislation relating to inter-basin diversion.

I feel the creation of this council to be the most important step ever taken in western development of water resources. Certainly it is important to Nevada's future, because we must have additional water. There is not enough water in the Truckee and Carson Rivers to satisfy the growing needs of the Reno-Sparks-Carson City area and Clark County's development will be stifled unless it is assured of more water--and soon.

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