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Media Contact: McGuire - Interior 4662
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The Navajo Indian Irrigation Project and the initial stage of the San Juan-Chama Reclamation Project, authorized in a bill passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President, will provide economic assistance to the Navajo Indians and will enable New Mexico to put to use a major portion of the water of the Upper Colorado River system to which it is entitled under two interstate compacts.

The authorizing legislation (S.107) provides that the two projects will be constructed, operated and maintained as participating projects of the five-State Colorado River Storage Project, now under construction in the Mountain West.

"I am extremely pleased that the bureaus of the Department of the Interior can now get moving on the construction of these very worthwhile resource development projects," said Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall. "Both projects provide opportunity for a resource program investment today that will return manifold dividends in the future years. The developments not only fit the pattern for wise and beneficial development of natural resources, as laid down by President Kennedy in his conservation messages to the Congress, but they also will provide economic opportunity for depressed areas,"

Secretary Udall, a native of the neighboring State of Arizona, indicated that he was especially pleased at the prospects of building facilities to deliver a dependable supply of irrigation water to the Navajo tribal lands in New Mexico,

"For many years the Federal Government has been trying to cope with the problem of bettering the economic conditions of the rapidly-increasing Navajo population, now numbering about 85,000," he said. “The Navajo Indian Irrigation Project contemplates the construction of distribution facilities to deliver water to approximately 110,000 acres of land within and adjacent to the Navajo Indian Reservation. The lands involved are located in two large areas on an elevated plain south of the San Juan River in San Juan County. An average of 508,000 acre-feet of water would be diverted annually from the San Juan River at the Navajo Dam and Reservoir, now nearing completion by the Bureau of Reclamation at a site on the San Juan River and would be conveyed some 150 miles across reservation lands.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimated that some 14 years will be required to complete planning on the $135 million project and to complete the canals and laterals, tunnels, siphons, and pumping plants required. Delivery of water to the first of the project lands, however, could be accomplished within five years. The project is planned to supply irrigation water but is adaptable to serve municipal and industrial water users if the need arises in the future.

The initial stage development of the Bureau of Reclamation's San Juan-Chama Project contemplates an average annual diversion of about 110,000 acre-feet from the upper tributaries of the San Juan River for utilization in the Rio Grande Basin in New Mexico. The $86 million project would provide needed municipal and industrial water for the city of Albuquerque and also would yield a full and supplemental irrigation water supply for about 120,000 acres of farming land in the Rio Grande Basin in New Mexico.

Recreation and the conservation and development of fish and wildlife resources which would be built over a period of about 5 years also would be purposes of the San Juan-Chama Project.