Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: July 5, 1989
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Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan announced today he has established a Water Policy Council designed to coordinate departmental policy decisions and management activities in the area of water resources.

The Council's formation reflects the importance of water policy in this country and the resolve by Lujan to develop and implement a strategy to improve management of our Nation's water resources. Coordination and reconciliation of the Department's various bureau viewpoints on water matters will be taken up by the Council, as well as formulation of departmental positions. Issues to be considered by the Council include wetlands, Indian water rights, ground water, dam safety, water quality, efficiency of water use, and other water related areas.

"Water has been a focal point throughout the history of this country," said Lujan. "However, as a nation, we have seldom come together to develop a strategy for its management. This places an additional urgency on the work of the Council as it strives to establish clear principles and policies for water resources."

The Council, which will hold its next meeting on July 11, 1989, will be chaired by Under Secretary of the Interior, Frank Bracken, and will consist of the Assistant Secretaries for Policy, Budget, and Administration, Indian Affairs, Water and Science, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Land and Minerals Management, and the Department's Solicitor.