Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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A conference was held July 6-7 at Lake Tahoe on the California-Nevada border to discuss water needs of the area, including Lake Tahoe, the Truckee Carson River Irrigation District, and the water requirements of the Pyramid Lake Indians.

Joining Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel in the conference were Gov. Ronald Reagan of California; Gov. Paul Laxalt of Nevada; Representatives from the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation; Norman B. Livermore, Jr. Administrator, California Resources Agency; Roland ,B. Westergard, Nevada State Division of Water Resources; Elmo DeRicco, Director of the Nevada Conservation Department; and Mitchell Melich, Solicitor for the Department of the Interior.

At the conclusion of the conference July 7, and again in a statement issued today, Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel stressed that at no time has the Department of the Interior intended to raise the level of Lake Tahoe above the elevation of 6,229.1 feet, and "only in the event of an extreme emergency or an act of God would the Lake level be raised above that elevation."

The Secretary said this policy was reasserted "forcefully" in his consultation with the two Governors.

The Secretary also said today that "with respect to the water compact being considered between California and Nevada, I informed both Governors, and I again say, that my initial objections to it were based on my responsibility to protect the water rights of the Pyramid Lake Indians, and to work out a just solution to stabilize the level of Pyramid Lake.

Secretary Hickel and Governor Laxalt will appoint a task force to resolve the Pyramid Lake problem and to stabilize it in a manner that will "absolutely" protect the rights of the Pyramid Lake Indians.

"If the Department and Nevada agree to this we see no reason why the California Legislature should not approve the compact," the Secretary added.

The Secretary suggested that if the California Assembly approves the compact during its present session, the compact not be submitted to Congress for ratification until the Department of the Interior and the State of Nevada agree upon a plan for stabilization of the level of Pyramid Lake.

The Nevada Legislature and the California Senate have approved the compact. It is presently being considered by the California Assembly.

The Secretary said the Governors agreed that discussions should be held as soon as possible and should incorporate a plan which would stabilize the level of Pyramid Lake. At present the lake is receding at a natural rate of approximately one foot a year.