



REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION, INC.

... a research and planning agency supported by voluntary membership to promote the coordinated development of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region.

230 West 41st Street, New York 36, N.Y.

(Area Code 212) LOngacre 5-1714

NEWS RELEASE

No. 1022
April 13, 1967

For information call Ernest Erber
(201) MARKET 2-3531

FOR RELEASE: a.m.'s Wednesday
April 19, 1967

NEW JERSEY WATER POLICY TO BE DEBATED AT REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION MEETING TODAY

Water supply experts--including private water company executives and state officials--will debate the proposition that New Jersey State government should take responsibility for planning all the State's water supply and bringing it to the retailers at a special meeting of the New Jersey Committee of Regional Plan Association today at the Brunswick Inn, East Brunswick.

Robert A. Roe, Commissioner of Conservation and Economic Development, George H. Buck, President of the Hackensack Water Company, James Girand, Vice President of the Elizabethtown Water Company, Oscar R. Wilensky, Counsel of the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission which was set up by the State, Francis W. Brennan, Chairman of the Water Rates and Resources Committee of the Greater Newark Chamber of Commerce, and Ernest Erber, Secretary of the New Jersey Committee of Regional Plan Association, will lead the discussion.

Sharp disagreements are expected.

The meeting will be attended by about 70 persons. More than 150 persons will assemble later to hear New Jersey Commissioners David J. Goldberg, Department of Transportation, and Paul Ylvisaker, Department of Community Affairs, both recently appointed.

Regional Plan is a 38-year old nonprofit civic organization working for the efficient, attractive and varied development of the New York Metropolitan Region, a 7,000-square-mile area surrounding the Port of New York in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. The New Jersey Committee was formed by Regional Plan in 1961. Albert W. Merck, an investment executive, chairs the Committee.

All participants will have a chance to express their views on a water policy for the State in small group discussions during the afternoon. A summary of opinion will be presented at 5:00 p.m. by Regional Plan staff members who will act as reporters. James F. Wright, Executive Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission, also will speak then.

The New Jersey Committee of Regional Plan expects to complete its recommendations for a water policy in New Jersey within the next few months.

#

The full statement to be discussed at the meeting is enclosed.

NOTE TO CITY EDITORS: Newsmen are welcome at the Conference. The session on water policy begins at 1:30 p.m. and ends about 6:00 p.m. Goldberg and Ylvisaker will be speaking about 8:00 p.m. A very limited number of dinner tickets will be available to the press on a first-call basis for reporters covering both the water sessions and the dinner speeches. Please call Mrs. Codling at (201) 622-3531 to reserve a press dinner ticket. If you can't have the meeting covered in person, you may telephone William B. Shore, Ernest Erber or William G. Andersen between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. at the Brunswick Inn to get a summary of the meeting. For advances on the Goldberg and Ylvisaker speeches, please ask their Department public information offices.

PUBLIC POLICY ON WATER IN NEW JERSEY

(For Discussion at meeting of New Jersey Committee, April 19, 1967)

The drought of the past few years in New Jersey is an "act of God." The resultant water shortage, however, is caused by the acts of man.

The drought is but a cyclical worsening of a situation that has been critical for many decades. The emergency of the last few years can become the chronic condition unless timely remedial measures are taken.

New Jersey's water crisis is born of a failure to make optimum use of the potential supply to meet the rising demand. The latter reflects the State's population growth, expanded per capita use, and increased industrial activity.

The failure to make optimum use of the potential water supply is due to (a) reliance upon one-time use and discharge into the sea through trunk sewers rather than treatment of effluent for re-use; (b) inadequate reservoir capacity; (c) high percentage of yield already being extracted from some of the State's watersheds; (d) use of potable water to dilute pollution in streams; and (e) disparate systems for storage and transmission, with inadequate public role in over-all planning and coordination.

Though New Jersey's water problem is compounded by its geography and political structure, it is an integral part of a crisis in water supply and pollution that is regional and national in scope, caused by growing urbanization, especially in the form of metropolitan sprawl. New Jersey's search for solu-

tions therefore, should be related to larger interstate programs. These will provide increased knowledge, and, hopefully, increased financial aid, especially as a result of Federal participation. The last session of Congress enacted the Clean Waters Restoration Act which makes some three and one-half billion dollars available to the states on a matching basis, provided that plans for water quality maintenance are adequate. New Jersey, however, must begin to set its own house in order to be able to take maximum advantage of interstate regional and national help.

Long-range water plans should relate to comprehensive environmental planning, land use, transportation, etc. Guidelines for such planning are emerging in the form of the Second Regional Plan being prepared by Regional Plan Association. Studies of water and air pollution and solid waste disposal are an important feature of the plan. Regional Plan's proposals should be a valuable contribution to planning by official agencies at state, regional and local levels.

The basic objective of public policy should be "total water management." The recent emergency helped clarify the need for such a comprehensive approach. It demonstrated the indivisibility of storage and transmission, of potable water supply and pollution, of conservation, recreation and flood control, of clean streams and sewerage systems, of quality standards and cost factors for industry and of urban development and the preservation of open space.

The first step toward "total water management" must be a clear policy which establishes guidelines for consistent and coordinated decisions and creates instrumentalities and programs designed to manage our water with the fullest possible efficiency. Basic to such a policy are the following postulates:

1. Water, as a common denominator of human existence, is indisputably in the public domain. Its critical necessity to daily life makes of water an extraordinary commodity justifying extraordinary measures to assure its quality and availability.
2. State government has constitutional authority to exercise control over water on behalf of the general welfare. The critical nature of the commodity and the complexity inherent in its management makes it inadvisable to delegate its power without over-all plans and programs, whether to local government, special purpose agencies (authorities, commission, etc.) or private utilities.
3. Public responsibility must encompass transmission of supply as well as ensuring adequate impounded surface storage and protection of sub-surface supplies. The adequacy of water supply is meaningless when not available at customary places of use. The water policy which created the State's first reservoirs should be expanded to include State responsibility for allocation of water and its transmission to reasonably convenient points for subsequent distribution by others. The exercise of such responsibility by the state need not disturb present ownership patterns of storage and distributive supply facilities. It does require the State to assure the availability of water locally, through existing facilities where they are adequate or through additional facilities where they are needed.

4. Centralization of the State's administrative structure for water management is essential for proper coordination. Responsibilities now separately allocated within the Departments of Health, Conservation and Economic Development, and Agriculture and such semi-autonomous state agencies as the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission, should be coordinated by a single arm of state government concerned with both supply and pollution control.

5. Local participation in water management should be provided through watershed or valley agencies and might be composed of county and municipal representatives. Such agencies would have power within their jurisdictions in accordance with state policy and the state master plan.

A policy plan for the long-range, orderly development of water management based on the foregoing policy objectives should be prepared and adopted by the Legislature. Such a plan should (a) set forth objectives; (b) allocate responsibilities and powers; (c) provide for the adoption and updating of a master plan which should include, but not be limited to, a program for storage, transmission, pollution abatement, flood control and recreation (reservoirs, streams, trunk lines, interconnections, treatment facilities, sewerage systems, water quality, etc.) to be administered by an appropriate state water agency; and (d) devise a fiscal program to meet the costs of capital investments (including long-term reservation of reservoir sites), and maintenance and operation of public facilities, including the allocation of assessments and charges to the various public and private beneficiaries.

A model for "total water management" exists in the Delaware River Basin Commission. Its adaptation to New Jersey's complex situation of many separate watersheds, the vested rights of private companies and public systems and the valid interests of counties and municipalities is a challenge to administrative inventiveness and political sagacity. Our future prosperity and well-being rests upon the ability of New Jersey's leaders to meet this challenge.