

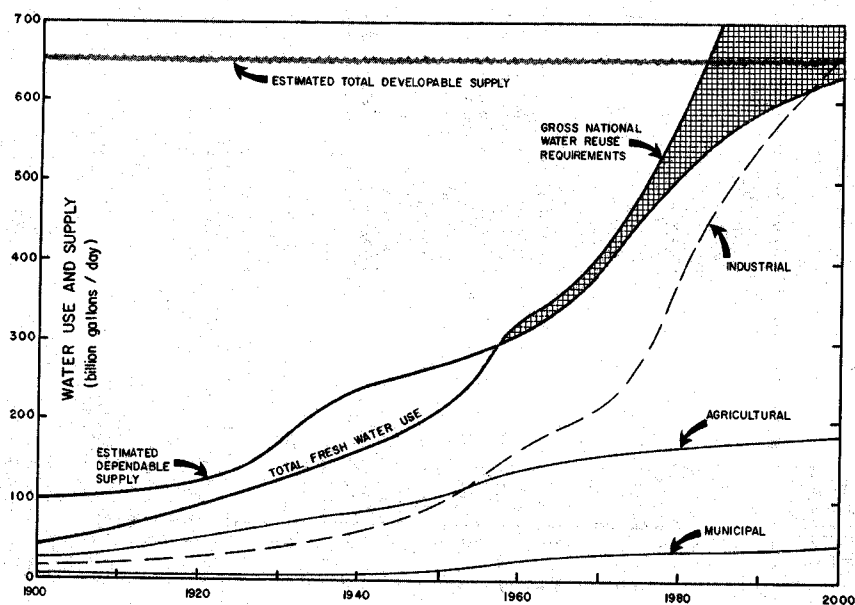


FIGURE 7. Estimate of withdrawal rate of water in U.S. for various purposes as against dependable and total developable supplies. (A.D. 1900-2000).

In spite of the obvious fallacies in FIGURE 7, it is amazing how many predictions of water doom are based exactly on this kind of oversimplification. The truth is that our nation as a whole is not running out of water and will not within the reasonably foreseeable future. The simplest explanation is three-faceted: (1) neither our water supply nor our water needs are uniformly distributed geographically; (2) neither our supply nor our demand are uniformly distributed with time; and (3) all water withdrawn and used is not consumed; much of it is returned to our fresh water resources for reuse.

Water Pollution and Water Supply, Inseparable Problems

Every use of water imposes some change in its quality. These changes, no matter how severe, are inconsequential if the water is not used further. But, in almost every case, some type of reuse does occur. Water may be reused for drinking, or as a habitat for fish and other aquatic life, or merely for aesthetic enjoyment. Reuse and multiple reuse of our water resources are common everyday occurrences. On the broadest scale, man has been using and reusing the same volume of water on the earth since Creation; here, purification and reuse occur naturally through the hydrologic cycle. More to the point, reuse occurs quite naturally and unavoidably from city to city and from factory to factory as water flows through our river systems to the ocean.