

STATEMENT SUBMITTED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, RESEARCH,
AND DEVELOPMENT BY THE MILL CREEK RESEARCH COUNCIL, INC.,
AUGUST 5, 1966

DEFICIENCIES IN RESEARCH CONCERNING THE MILL CREEK IMPOUNDMENT
PROJECT

The Mill Creek Basin, a portion of Huron River watershed in southeastern lower Michigan, is under consideration by the Corps of Engineers as the site for a multipurpose impoundment project. If constructed this project would cost between \$20 and \$30 million. Its primary purpose would be low-flow augmentation, with other uses of water supply, flood control, fish and wildlife development, and recreation.

The site selected is in slightly rolling country and is a portion of a highly productive agricultural region. The topography would allow for a reservoir which would have an average depth of about 9 feet and when drawn down for flow-augmentation there could be as much as 6,000 acres of exposed earth. The storage capacity would be approximately 80,000 acre-feet, with 8,900 surface acres. The land acquisition would be nearly 16,000 acres.

The storage allowance for annual evaporation is 14,000 acre-feet, which is 2,000 acre-feet more than the storage capacity planned for supplementary water supply needs in the year 2000. This evaporation is equivalent of 4,591,600,000 gallons per year.

There are several smaller and deeper reservoir sites in the Huron River watershed which are in less productive land. These might be used singly or in combination to serve the needs of the community. However, under present laws which restrict the Corps of Engineers to multipurpose projects with "flood control benefits" these cannot even be evaluated by the corps.

The original plans for the reservoir are based on erroneous flow-rate statistics of the Huron River which established minimum flow at 21 cubic feet per second. Modern data, corrected to allow for leakage at dams and water pumped from the river for water supply, shows the minimum flow at more than 75 cubic feet per second.

The Michigan State Health Department required that a minimum flow of 50 cubic feet per second be guaranteed for the protection of the downriver communities if Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti were to expand their sewage treatment plants. It was indicated that this amount would provide a margin of safety for at least 20 years. At this time it is expected that water supply and sewage disposal services will be furnished from outside the basin. Yet the Corps of Engineers has made no attempt to reflect the errors by revising the storage requirements and is proceeding with the original concept which even before corrected data became available was a very much larger project than had been recommended as desirable or necessary by the Michigan Water Resources Commission and by Black & Veatch, engineering consultants.