

Not to be overlooked is the important water supply this project will provide for municipal and industrial use, fish and wildlife and recreation uses.

South Dakota is fortunate to have stored within its boundaries, by four Missouri main-stem dams, thousands of acre-feet of water. The storage of this water has, however, inundated more than 500,000 acres of land. South Dakotans have long counted upon the construction of the Oahe unit to replace the production from these lands lost as a result of the construction of these reservoirs. These dams are now almost complete and we are looking forward to the realization of the vast irrigation potential they make possible.

The importance of the Oahe project to the State is tremendous and I am pleased to report to you that this project has the strong support of almost all of the people in the subdistrict area. This support has been evidenced in a number of ways. Initial support was demonstrated in 1960 when the subdistrict was formed, thus creating an organization with taxing power capable of contracting to assume a portion of the costs associated with the development of the Oahe unit. As stated earlier the subdistrict was created as the result of a favorable vote in excess of 85 percent.

In 1965 farmers directly concerned indicated their desire to proceed with the development of the project when they formed two irrigation districts. These two districts, located in Brown and Spink Counties, included the irrigable land proposed for the first-stage development. The organization of these two districts was approved by a favorable vote in excess of 80 percent of the people owning land within their boundaries.

At the 1966 general election local people again demonstrated their support when they granted the subdistrict the authority to enter into contracts with the United States and others to actually assist with the continued development of the Oahe unit and other water resource projects within its boundaries. The question of whether or not this authority should be granted was decided by every voter qualified to vote at the general election within the entire 15½ counties which comprise the subdistrict.

Voters approved the granting of such authority by an overall majority of 75.1 percent. The granting of this authority authorized the subdistrict board of directors to make a further general tax levy, not to exceed 1 mill, on all taxable property within the subdistrict in support of water resource projects. In my opinion the results of this and the other two referendums previously mentioned expresses better than words the local support and interest in the development of the Oahe unit and in water resource development in the subdistrict.

The Oahe conservancy subdistrict sincerely appreciates the opportunity to appear before this committee in support of the early development of the Oahe irrigation unit and urges your approval of Senate bill 6 so that construction of the Oahe unit can begin at an early date.

Mr. Chairman, I would once again like to express our appreciation for your coming to South Dakota and holding this hearing. It is our hope that this hearing will speed early authorization of the Oahe unit.

Thank you.

And also, Mr. Chairman, I have with me several statements and resolutions supporting the development of Oahe irrigation unit, from