

The Milwaukee Railroad favors authorization of the Oahe Irrigation Project which would move the project into the initial planning and construction stage. The railroad supported the program for building the Oahe Dam notwithstanding the elimination of thousands of acres of productive valley lands tributary to the railroad inundated by the waters of the reservoir. Diversion of the water from the reservoir of the Missouri River for irrigation has been a basic and integral part of the entire Missouri Basin project from the time it was first proposed. In 1966 landowners within the project boundaries overwhelmingly approved the entering into contractual obligations for the repayment of the project assigned to them. We believe this demonstrates their desire for the project in many ways.

We trust this committee will consider favorably legislation which will result in the multi-purpose developments of the Oahe Irrigation Project for the people of north central South Dakota. Thank you.

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STATEMENT OF JOHN ETBAUER, PRESIDENT, REE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., MILLER, S. DAK.

My name is John Etbauer. I am a cattle raiser near Ree Heights, South Dakota, and I am here today as President of Ree Electric Cooperative, Inc. Our cooperative urges the authorization of this project because we believe in the 1,435 rural families who are our members in Hyde and Hand Counties. The great bulk of these people are livestock growers like myself. As such, they are vitally interested in the source of supply of feed grains and hay for feeding livestock.

The addition of 190,000 irrigable acres, which is foreseen in the first state legislation, would have a tremendous impact on stabilization of the feed supply for eastern South Dakota. As a livestock grower, I need feeders to buy the 110 to 120 head of yearling steers which I sell in an average year. Now, they go to Iowa where feed corn is more plentiful. These feeders need an adequate, stable and dependable source of feed supply. Occasionally we buy corn to feed the calves on our place and to feed out a few heifers. So far, we have been able to get this corn in the state. The day could come, however, when drought could make it impossible to get enough corn locally and we would have to import massive amounts.

Ree Electric Cooperative supports the Oahe Project also because we believe it is good for the economy of the state. The added income, rural and urban, which Oahe would provide has been expressed ably by others here today. We believe Oahe would be good for the nation because it would increase the production of food that will be so badly needed by a mushrooming population.

Ree Electric believes that the Oahe Project is essential and that it should be approved as fast as possible.

The two counties we serve will benefit also from the construction of this project—the primary feeder canal crosses the northern parts of our counties. Water supply will help fill some of the smaller potholes which sometimes dry in the summer. And possibly in the second stage, when the Missouri Slope irrigation area is organized and approved our project area will receive direct irrigation benefits.

Members of the Subcommittee, we urge you most strongly to press for the authorization and construction of this most critically needed project.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to represent Ree Electric Cooperative today.

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STATEMENT OF ROBERT BROER, CHAIRMAN, BEADLE COUNTY WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

I am Robert Broer, Chairman of the Beadle County Water Resources Development Committee, organized in March 1960.

The purpose of this organization is to determine the beneficial use and conservation of all water available and to fully utilize this resource for the betterment of our economy and well being. Much has been accomplished by this group representing all sections of Beadle County in informing the people on the issues involved. Organization of the Sub-District and the contract authority vote are significant for the successful outcome of these issues. Full support of the Oahe Irrigation Project has been demonstrated through the support given by the voters of this area.

We realize that the initial stage of this project will not include the Beadle Canal and that most of the benefits to our area will be secondary and indirect.