

this type of a conservation program in cooperation with private landowners.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to insert this letter into the record at this time.

We believe that these lands on Cottonwood Bench as well as on third division should be returned to private ownership as contemplated by this legislation as soon as possible. Obviously, land in private ownership will be better managed and will have higher sustained land use through proper fertilization, crop rotation, greater weed control, and other good farming practices.

Everyone would benefit by having these leased lands in private hands. The greater productivity flowing from private ownership would increase the taxable wealth thereby benefiting local schools, the Fremont County, State of Wyoming, and the United States.

The continued agricultural use of third division, Cottonwood Bench, and Muddy Ridge areas is essential to recreational features of the area. Lake Cameahwait, commonly known as Bass Lake, is a small body of water covering approximately 350 surface acres and is located in the Cottonwood Bench and Muddy Ridge areas of the project. This lake is located in the lower right-hand corner of the map previously introduced. This lake depends entirely upon irrigation waste return flows for its water supply, originating, of course, from the project.

Bass Lake is an excellent habitat for rainbow trout with plenty of natural feed. The lake is well stocked and is a popular fishery the year around. It also is excellent for boating, water skiing, and picnicking. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission is vitally concerned with the continued agricultural use of the area not only for the preservation of Bass Lake but for the foliage, potholes, marshes, and drains resulting from the irrigation system. These features benefit upland game birds and waterfowl, thereby creating an excellent area for hunting.

I am vice president of the board of directors of the Riverton Valley Electric Association, Inc., Riverton, Wyo. I have been a member of the board of this organization and also a director for 18 years. This rural electric cooperative provides area coverage for the entire Riverton reclamation project. The co-op has built lines throughout the project and has 94 meter or member locations on third division alone. The co-op has constructed 33 miles of line to serve this area. The total investment is estimated to be \$79,430 based upon an average cost of \$845 per service. Since the third division buy-out, only 29 locations are still active and 65 are idle. These idle services represent a loss of annual revenue to RVEA of \$9,400, according to the co-op's manager. The investment in these electric lines has been spent and the co-op is obligated to repay this expenditure to the United States through the Rural Electric Administration. The lines are energized to serve the 29 active locations. The loss of revenue from the 65 idle meters has caused a great hardship on the co-op since 1964. Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record at this time a letter from W. S. Comings, Jr., manager of the Riverton Valley Electric Association, addressed to Midvale Irrigation District detailing the co-op's investment and loss of revenue resulting from the third division buy-out.