

A BILL To expand and extend the desalting program being conducted by the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Act of July 3, 1952 (66 Stat. 328), as amended (42 U.S.C. 1951-1958g), is further amended to read as follows:

SEC. 1. In view of the increasing shortage of usable water in many parts of the Nation and the importance of finding new sources of supply to meet present and future water needs, it is the policy of the Congress to provide for development and demonstration of practicable means for large-scale production from saline water of low-cost water suitable for municipal, industrial, agricultural or any other beneficial purpose, and for studies and research related thereto.

SEC. 2. When used in this Act—

(a) "Saline water" shall mean seawater, brackish water, and other mineralized or chemically charged water.

(b) "Desalting" shall mean any process for the reclamation or treatment of saline water for any beneficial purpose.

(c) "Pilot plant" shall mean an experimental unit of up to 100,000 gallons per day capacity, used for early evaluation and development of new or improved desalting processes and also for investigations in areas of supporting research and development to obtain needed technical and engineering data.

(d) "Test bed" shall mean an experimental desalting plant of up to two million gallons per day capacity, used for further evaluation and refinement of selected processes beyond that permitted by a pilot plant.

(e) "Module" shall mean a section or integral portion of a desalting plant which is used initially to confirm new or improved desalting technology on a large scale and the critical design features required for subsequent prototype construction.

(f) "Prototype plant" shall mean a first of a kind water-producing plant of sufficient scale and detail used for complete process verification of pilot plant test bed or modular tested technology and process economics.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Interior shall—

(a) conduct or provide for fundamental and applied research and studies to develop the best and most economical desalting processes, including processes for the recovery of commercially valuable byproducts produced during desalting and for the minimization of environmentally harmful effects associated therewith;

(b) conduct or provide for engineering and technical development work, including the construction and testing of pilot plants, test beds, modules, or any components thereof, for the purposes of evaluating the research and studies authorized by section 3(a) of this Act and advancing desalting processes and plant designs to the point where they can be demonstrated on a practicable scale;

(c) report to the President and to the Congress his recommendation as to the best opportunity for the early construction of large-scale prototype desalting plants. Plant siting shall consider the need for new water resources in a comprehensive plan for the area selected, plant size and best-suited technology to demonstrate the practicability of construction and operation of large-scale plants for water supply, and the availability of cooperating entity or entities willing to enter into agreements for marketing the water produced;

(d) conduct or provide for studies, surveys, and analyses (i) to determine the potential needs for, and uses of, desalting processes, (ii) to determine the present and prospective costs of reclaiming or treating saline water in various parts of the United States, and (iii) to furnish the technical and economic information to water resource planners as to the feasibility of constructing and operating proposed desalting plants;

(e) coordinate the studies, surveys, analyses, and reports authorized by this section 3 with those authorized by the Water Resources Planning Act of July 22, 1965, P.L. 89-80, 79 Stat. 244; the Colorado River Basin Project Act of September 30, 1968, 82 Stat. 885; the Federal reclamation laws (Act of June 17, 1902), 32 Stat. 388, and acts amendatory or supplementary thereto the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of June 30, 1948, 62 Stat. 1155, as amended and supplemented; and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 83 Stat. 852.

SEC. 4. In carrying out his functions under this Act, the Secretary of the Interior may—

(a) make grants to educational institutions and scientific organizations and enter into contracts with such institutions and organizations and with industrial or engineering firms;