

III. DESALTED WATER AND THE FUTURE

General

The present legislation (P. L. 89-118) correctly emphasizes the research and development of low-cost processes for the conversion of saline water to fresh water for beneficial consumptive uses. However, benefits other than those concerned with consumptive use will inevitably occur as desalting technology is further refined. This report bases its recommendations on the need for the accelerated development of desalting technology and on the advantages expected to accrue due to the use of desalting in economically meeting future water needs in this country. Other spin-off benefits such as flexibility in foreign policy options, improvements in industrial processes, etc., will come with an improved desalting technology. The extra benefits in these areas reinforce the assessment of benefits that justify the program of action recommended in this report.

Desalting and Water Resources Development

Rationally, desalted water should only be used where it is the lowest cost alternative to meet a water need and where that need can justify the cost of the water involved. While desalting may in some instances supply the whole water supply for a community,