

# Conversion Plant For Sea Water Now Under Study

Millions of gallons of de-salted water from the Pacific Ocean may be supplied daily to Southern California's homes and industries by 1970 as a result of a far-reaching engineering study formally authorized last week in Washington, D.C.

It will determine the feasibility of building on the Southern California coastline what would be many times over the world's largest sea water conversion plant.

Entering into a contract for the study, which will include preparation of a preliminary design for the plant, were the Department of Interior, the Atomic Energy Commission and The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Signing the agreement were Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall; Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg, AEC chairman; and Robert A. Skinner, MWD general manager and chief engineer.

IN A JOINT statement, Udall and Seaborg said:

"This study dramatizes the progress that has been made in two of the country's most exciting and potentially useful research efforts: (1) the search for economic efforts for desalting sea and brackish water and (2) the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

"It represents an important move in line with President Johnson's call for an 'aggressive and imaginative program' to advance the art of desalting sea water."

UDALL WENT on to say, "In the water field, I can think of no agency that is more competent and that has done more things than the Metropolitan Water District. We are very happy to have it as a partner in this project."

Skinner said that Metropolitan, which delivers supplemental water to 9,000,000 people in Southern California, is "intensely interested" in sea water conversion as an additional source of supply to help meet the area's continuing and rapid growth.

He emphasized, however, that the District, even with such a plant, would have to rely on Colorado River and Northern California water for

much the greater part of its supply.

ATTENDING the signing ceremonies in Secretary Udall's office were California's two U. S. Senators, Thomas H. Kuchel and Pierre Salinger; Congressman Craig Hosmer, a member of both the House Interior and Atomic Energy committee; and AEC Commissioner James T. Ramey.

Also present were three other MWD officials, Joseph Jensen, Board chairman, Milo Dellmann, a member of the Board's executive committee; and Charles C. Cooper Jr., general counsel.

The proposed plant would be nuclear-fueled and would produce large quantities of

electric power, thus reducing the cost of the sea water desalination.

IT WOULD have a capacity of between 50 and 150 million gallons of water a day or enough for a population of from 275,000 to 825,000. The largest existing sea water conversion plant, located at Aruba in the Caribbean, produces 3.5 million gallons daily.

The dual-purpose Southern California plant would generate between 150,000 and 750,000 kilowatts of electric power to be sold to public or private utilities in the area.

Under the contract, Metropolitan will have the over-all responsibility for the conduct of the study by an engineering firm which will be select-

ed by Metropolitan subject to the approval of Interior and AEC.

THE STUDY, which will also recommend a site for the plant, will take approximately one year. Interior, AEC and Metropolitan will each pay one-third of its cost up to a maximum of \$150,000 for each agency.

Besides engineering and economic feasibility, preliminary design and recommendation of a site, the study will cover possible nuclear reactor systems, detailed construction cost estimates, proposals for disposition of the excess power, and detailed estimates of the costs of producing the water and power at the recommended location.



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