

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

ATTN:
 SUBJECT

DATE JAN 16 1973

SUBJECT Policy on Storage and Releases for Water Quality Control
in Reservoirs Planned by Federal Agencies

n-73-1

TO: - All Regional Administrators

1. PURPOSE

To amend EPA policy on determining the need for and value of reservoir storage for water quality control.

2. BACKGROUND

a. Section 102(b) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 requires, in part, that in the planning of any reservoir by a Federal agency, inclusion of storage for regulation of streamflow shall be considered, except that such storage shall not be provided as a substitute for adequate treatment or other methods of controlling waste at the source. The Act also provides for additional coverage over previous legislation in that reservoirs constructed under license granted by the Federal Power Commission are also included. The Act further provides that the need for, value of and impact of storage for water quality control shall be determined by EPA, whereas the need for and value of storage for other stream flow regulation purposes shall be determined by the Federal agency planning the reservoir. To administer this legislation, "adequate treatment or other methods of controlling waste at the source", must first be defined and then the pollutant reductions attainable from application of these measures must be estimated.

b. Over the past several years, advancement in pollution control technology, together with an increasing recognition of the limitations of flow augmentation as a means of enhancing water quality, have indicated that reservoir storage for water quality control is generally a poor substitute for at-source pollution control measures. This points toward the need for a policy requiring provisions for high degrees of pollutant reduction from at-source controls or treatment methods prior to consideration of reservoir storage and releases for water quality control. Such a policy would be consistent with the National goals for water quality and control of pollution sources set forth in Section 101 of the Act.

3. STRUCTURE OF POLICY

The enclosed guidelines and an appendix defining "adequate treatment" supplement the policy statement presented below.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

a. Storage to be included in a reservoir or other impoundment project for regulation of stream flow shall not be used as a substitute for the provision of adequate waste treatment or other methods for controlling waste at the source.

b. As a basic element of this policy, EPA defines "adequate waste treatment or other methods of controlling waste at the source" as the best available pollution control technology economically achievable including advanced waste treatment techniques, land disposal, land management practices, process and procedure innovations, changes in operating methods and other alternatives.

c. Water quality monetary benefits obtainable from streamflow regulation shall be credited only to reservoir storage specifically required for and allocated to water quality control.

d. EPA shall recommend to construction agencies of Federal projects the inclusion of storage for water quality control by flow regulation only where such storage is required as a supplement to application of the best available technology and is in consonance with water quality management plans developed under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act or its amendments. This same provision shall also apply to reservoir projects constructed under license granted by the Federal Power Commission.

e. When EPA recommends provision of storage for water quality control, all the environmental consequences of such provision should be considered, so that EPA will be in a position to comment favorably on the water quality storage aspect of the project when the environmental impact statement on the project is circulated for comment.

f. An EPA recommendation regarding the provision of storage and releases for water quality control shall take into account State laws and policies with respect to such storage.

g. When water quality control storage included within existing reservoirs is no longer needed, such storage should be reallocated to other purposes based upon appropriate studies and after consultation between the construction agencies and EPA. Reservoir operations should be modified as indicated by the study findings.

5. APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

This policy applies to EPA's evaluation of the need for and value of water quality control storage in reservoirs planned by the Corps of Engineers, Bureau

of Reclamation, Soil Conservation Service and other Federal agencies and in reservoirs licensed by the Federal Power Commission. EPA will implement this policy to the extent of its authorities in conducting all program activities including review of reservoir plans under Section 102(b), water quality management planning, interagency water and related land resource planning, and review of environmental statements.

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William D. Ruckelshaus
Administrator

Enclosure