

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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The Assistant to the President

O.F.

155-E-10

April 19, 1954

Dear Mr. Zahniser:

x O.F. 155-A-22
The President has asked me to reply to your letter of March 26, 1954, expressing concern over this Administration's approval of the Upper Colorado River Storage project, including the proposed Echo Park Dam.

I fully understand your concern as to the need for protection of our national parks. I am glad, therefore, to have the opportunity of explaining the reason for our recommendation to the Congress that construction of the Echo Park Dam be authorized.

In general, withdrawals of lands for park or monument purposes have been made with the intention of excluding water storage and power projects from their confines, so that the unique characteristics of the areas would be preserved for posterity. This Administration will strongly oppose proposals to encroach upon such areas unless overriding considerations of national interest should so require.

The Dinosaur National Monument was established in 1915 to preserve an area in which a great concentration of dinosaur fossils was found. It originally consisted of eighty acres. When it was enlarged by Presidential proclamation in 1938, provision was made for the eventual construction of water storage and power projects in the monument. It was recognized at that time that the water resources of the area were of too great importance to the economic progress of the West to be withheld completely from development. The original monument lands will not be affected in any way by construction of the Echo Park Dam.

We are fully cognizant of the many objections to the construction of Echo Park Dam. Despite the provision of the 1938 proclamation indicating an intent to permit construction of water storage and power projects within the enlarged Dinosaur National Monument area, sincere efforts were made to avoid such infringements by the Upper Colorado River Storage project. On the basis of a careful appraisal by Under Secretary of the Interior Tudor of all the factors involved, Secretary McKay concluded that the advantages of building Echo Park Dam and Reservoir outweigh its disadvantages. After review of the Secretary's findings by the Executive Office, the Administration recommended that the Congress authorize the Echo Park Reservoir.

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The selection of this site to meet the broad requirements of the national interest and those of the area involved is in no way a departure from our stated policy of protection of the national parks and monuments.

Sincerely,

SHERMAN ADAMS

~~Mr. Howard Kahniser~~
~~Executive Secretary and Editor~~
~~The Wilderness Society~~
~~2144 P Street, N. W.~~
~~Washington 7, D. C.~~