

**WATER SUPPLY OF LOS ANGELES,  
CALIFORNIA: HEARING BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC LANDS.  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 66TH  
CONGRESS, 1ST SESSION ON H. R. 406;  
OCTOBER 31—NOVEMBER 4, 1919**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649731527

Water Supply of Los Angeles, California: Hearing Before the Committee on the Public Lands. House of Representatives 66th Congress, 1st Session on H. R. 406; October 31–November 4, 1919 by United States Committee on Public Lands

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**UNITED STATES COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS**

**WATER SUPPLY OF LOS ANGELES,  
CALIFORNIA: HEARING BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC LANDS.  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 66TH  
CONGRESS, 1ST SESSION ON H. R. 406;  
OCTOBER 31—NOVEMBER 4, 1919**



**WATER SUPPLY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

---

---

**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC LANDS**

U. S. Congress. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-SIXTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

1143  
-7207

ON

**H. R. 406**

A BILL GRANTING RIGHTS OF WAY OVER CERTAIN  
LANDS FOR THE WATER SUPPLY OF  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 31—NOVEMBER 4, 1919



WASHINGTON  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

1919

KF27  
.P76  
1919c  
C-781

~~T1225  
L7A5  
1919a~~

COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC LANDS.

SIXTY-SIXTH CONGRESS.

FIRST SESSION.

N. J. SINNOTT, Oregon, Chairman.

ADDISON T. SMITH, Idaho.	JOHN S. BENTHAM, Indiana.
JOHN A. ELSTON, California.	JOHN W. SUMMERS, Washington.
BERTRAND H. SNELL, New York.	SCOTT FERRIS, Oklahoma.
CHARLES A. NICHOLS, Michigan.	EDWARD T. TAYLOR, Colorado.
WILLIAM J. GRAHAM, Illinois.	JOHN E. BAKER, California.
JOHN M. BEAR, North Dakota.	JAMES H. MAYS, Utah.
B. C. HERNANDEZ, New Mexico.	JOHN N. TILLMAN, Arkansas.
HAYES B. WHITE, Kansas.	HARRY L. GANDY, South Dakota.
WILLIAM N. VAILE, Colorado.	HUGH S. HERSMAN, California.
HENRY E. BARBOUR, California.	PAUL E. JOHNSON, Mississippi.

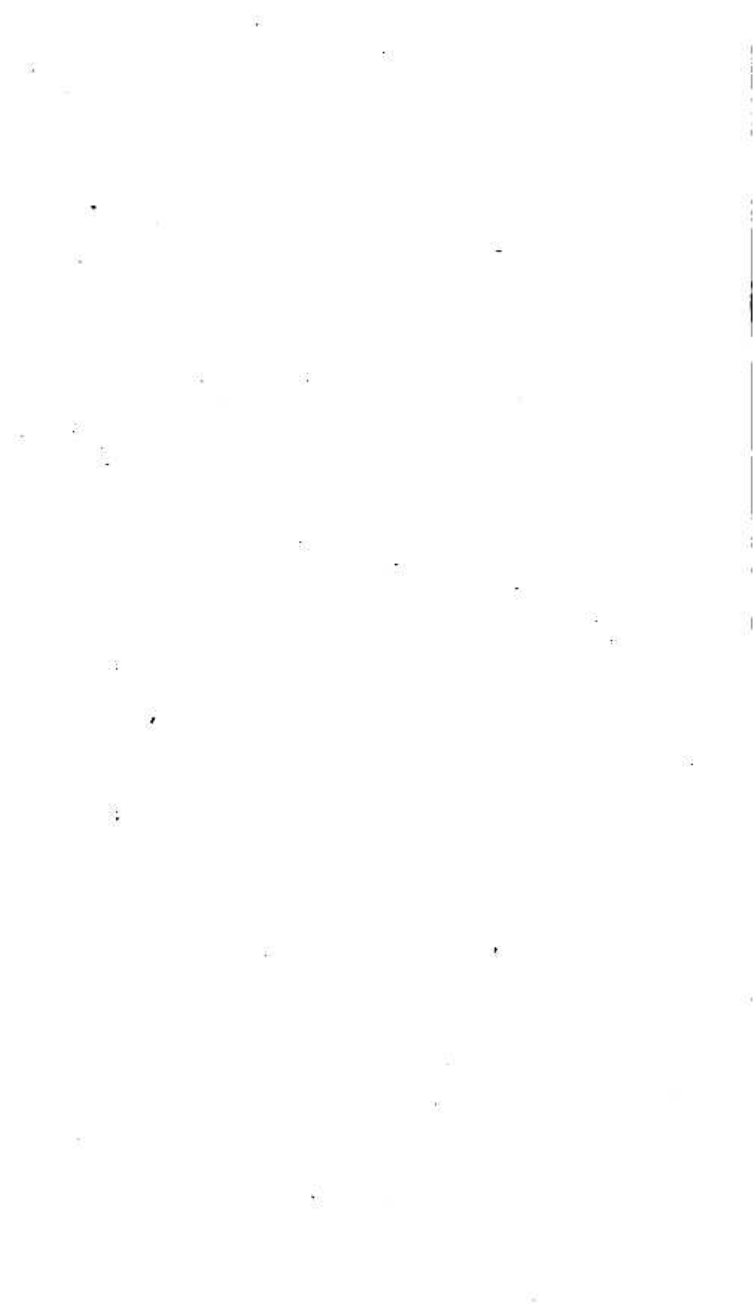
EDWARD D. BALDWIN, Clerk.

B. of B.  
MAY 1 1920

27. 2/10/02

### TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Statement of—	Page.
Hon. Henry Z. Osborne, United States Representative from California.....	5
Hon. Charles H. Randall, United States Representative from California.....	25
W. B. Mathews, special counsel to city of Los Angeles, Calif.....	30, 192
	37, 85, 93,
Hon. William Kettner, United States Representative from California.....	62
W. A. Edgar, Imperial, Calif., representing landowners in the Inyokern and Fremont Valleys.....	106
K. K. Fritz, Pomona, Calif., representing executive committee, Inyokern, Mojave irrigation district.....	114, 119
Judge E. C. Finney, board of appeals of Interior Department.....	133
Edison F. Adams, representing Mono Power Co., of Oakland, Calif.....	151
Judge John R. Dixon, attorney for the Southern Sierras Power Co.....	162, 167
Charles F. Consaul, representing Southern Sierras Power Co.....	167
Appendix A: Letters from representatives of parties in interest and Department of Interior reporting on conference suggested by the committee.....	204
Appendix B: Differences between H. R. 406, Sixty-sixth Congress, first session, and an act approved June 30, 1906, granting to the city of Los Angeles certain rights of way.....	208





## WATER SUPPLY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
*Friday, October 31, 1919.*

The committee met at 10 o'clock a. m., Hon. Nicholas J. Sinnott (chairman) presiding.

The CHAIRMAN. The meeting was called this morning to consider H. R. 406, introduced by Mr. Osborne, of California, a bill to grant certain rights of way and power rights and sites to the city of Los Angeles. I understand there is objection from some people in California, who claim that the granting of these rights will interfere with certain proposed irrigation and power development, and so on, which they have in contemplation. I would like to know who is here to be heard in favor of and against the bill. First, who will appear in favor of the bill?

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Chairman, I will make a brief statement in regard to the bill, but the principal statement will be made by Mr. W. B. Mathews, counsel for the city of Los Angeles, who has been the counsel in aqueduct matters for a great many years; in fact, from its inception.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there anyone else here in favor of the bill?

Mr. OSBORNE. We have Representative Randall and Mr. R. Woodland Gates.

Mr. BARBOUR. There are several here who want to appear on the other side.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, who desires to appear against the bill?

Mr. KETTNER. Mr. Chairman, there are a number of people here who desire to be heard, who are against the bill in its present form, Mr. Fritz, of Pomona, Judge Dixon, and Mr. Edgar, of Imperial Valley. Did you want to be heard, Mr. Adams?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. KETTNER. Mr. Adams and Mr. Consaul. I believe, Mr. Chairman, all the people in my district who are opposed to this bill are present, and I hope that you will be able—

The CHAIRMAN. You have mentioned four; is that all?

Mr. KETTNER. That is all, I believe. They represent the different interests that are interested.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to get some idea as to how many want to be heard.

Mr. KETTNER. Unless Mr. Osborne wishes to start in, I will ask that Mr. Fritz be heard first.

The CHAIRMAN. We will first hear the proponents of the bill.

Mr. KETTNER. Very well. I thought we had that in the former hearings.

The CHAIRMAN. I will state that to-day is private calendar day in the House, and I understand they are going to take up the private

calendar, there are a number of bills on that calendar, from this committee, so we can not run now longer than about a quarter of twelve.

Mr. Osborne, will you take charge of the argument in favor of this measure, and introduce the witnesses that you desire to be heard. I wish that all the witnesses would state their names and residence, and their interest in this legislation, for or against it.

**STATEMENT OF HON. HENRY Z. OSBORNE, A REPRESENTATIVE  
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.**

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the committee, this bill, which is for the purpose of granting rights or way and reservoir sites, powerhouse sites and other easements in favor of the city of Los Angeles, has been before the committee during the past two sessions of Congress. There are some new members here who are perhaps not familiar with what has been done in the past.

This bill was introduced by me early in the Sixty-Fifth Congress, and on account of the general power bill, it was postponed from time to time. A hearing finally was had in the early part of the present year, in January and February. At that time there were a number of protestants against certain features of the bill, and among them, some of the gentlemen who are here now. After a very full discussion before the committee, agreements were arrived at to the satisfaction of all the protestants to the bill who had appeared at that time. The committee took into account the various agreements, which were satisfactory to everybody, and approved the bill, and reported it to the House favorably, unanimously. It was so late in the session, about 10 days before the adjournment, that we were unable to get it before the House.

The CHAIRMAN. Was that bill identical with this bill, H. R. 406?

Mr. OSBORNE. It is exactly, word for word and letter for letter, and punctuation and all, like this bill.

Mr. SMITH. Which was approved even by those who had been opponents of the bill?

Mr. OSBORNE. Absolutely; without a dissenting voice anywhere. I now present the bill again to the committee. In doing so I think it not improper to state that the Los Angeles Aqueduct is mainly for the purpose of providing the water supply of the city of Los Angeles. Some years ago we discovered in Los Angeles that we were running short of water, and our engineers looked about for a water supply, and they reported to the city in favor of this supply, if it could be obtained, from the Owens River. I will state that Owens River empties into Owens Lake, which is one of the dead lakes which are not uncommon in the western country, like the Great Salt Lake, Mono Lake, and Owens Lake. The water in the lake is extremely brackish and forms incrustations of minerals of various kinds and is not potable. After the water gets into that lake it is of no further value for agricultural purposes or for anything excepting the amount of mineral that forms in this water.

I do not know that I could state the situation more concisely than it is stated in the report of this committee made to the House on the 17th of February of this year. The report was adopted by the full

committee and presented by Judge Raker as the mouthpiece of the committee:

The Los Angeles Aqueduct, for which rights of way, reservoir sites, and powerhouse sites upon and across public lands are granted in this bill, is the main water supply of the city of Los Angeles, Calif. The aqueduct was completed several years ago. It constitutes one of the most extensive municipally owned water-supply systems, supplemented by a hydroelectric-power system, in the United States. The aqueduct is 240 miles long, extending from the base of Mount Whitney, on the east side of the Sierras, for the most part through a rough, mountainous country, sparsely populated, to the city of Los Angeles, now having a population of about 600,000. It is cement lined throughout nearly its entire length, about 50 miles of which is tunneled through the solid rock of the mountains, and has a capacity of 20,000 miner's inches—a very good-sized river. This water prior to the construction of the aqueduct discharged in Owens Lake—

Which, as I have explained to you, is brackish, and thereafter the water becomes of no value.

The city of Los Angeles has utilized to some extent the facilities which the aqueduct affords in its descent from about 4,000 feet elevation to nearly sea level to generate electric power for the lighting of the city and for power uses, and contemplates further generation of power. It has one unit of 37,500 horsepower completed and in use. The city owns the water which it uses and intends to use under the laws of the State of California, and is asking only for rights of way across public lands, as stated. In the construction of the aqueduct it was found necessary, because of the geologic structure of the mountains—

The CHAIRMAN (interposing). Does that say they are asking only for rights of way? Are they not asking for dam sites and for the impounding of water?

Mr. OSBORNE. Yes; we are asking—

The CHAIRMAN (continuing). Storage dams and reservoirs?

Mr. OSBORNE. Yes; that I stated prior to this point.

Mr. TAYLOR. That means, I presume, they are not asking for any more water.

Mr. OSBORNE. We are not asking for any more water, because the Government does not furnish the water. Our water rights come from the State.

Mr. TAYLOR. I understand that.

Mr. OSBORNE. And this committee would have nothing whatever to do with that and could not help us out in that.

Mr. TAYLOR. I understand that.

Mr. OSBORNE. The change in the line of construction of the aqueduct was found necessary because of the geological formation and for other economical reasons. It was necessary to deviate from the original rights of way granted in the act of June 30, 1906; and I will state that that act was the original act of which this is an amendment and one in which the then President of the United States, Col. Roosevelt, took a very great interest. This project appealed to him very strongly, and he helped out very greatly in obtaining these original rights of way, to which we are now asking something additional. The deviation in some places is but a few feet and at other places many hundred feet, but for a length of about 80 miles.

(Letter of President Theodore Roosevelt regarding grant of lands and rights of way for the water and power projects of the city of Los Angeles:)

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
Washington, June 25, 1906.

Messrs. Walcott and Pinchot state that there is no objection to permitting Los Angeles to use the water for irrigating purposes so far as there is a sur-