

**REPORT STATE WATER  
PROBLEMS CONFERENCE,  
NOVEMBER 25, 1916**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649690596

Report State Water Problems Conference, November 25, 1916 by Various

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**VARIOUS**

**REPORT STATE WATER  
PROBLEMS CONFERENCE,  
NOVEMBER 25, 1916**



# REPORT

*California*  
**State Water Problems  
Conference**

Acting under instructions of the California Legislature to recommend "a unified state policy with reference to irrigation, reclamation, water storage, flood control, municipalities and drainage, with due regard to the needs of water power, mining and navigation."

NOVEMBER 25, 1916



CALIFORNIA STATE PRINTING OFFICE  
SACRAMENTO  
1916

Each  
Min. Pl. Lib,  
3-18-27,  
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File 6-6-20

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## STATE WATER PROBLEMS CONFERENCE.

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, November 25, 1916.

*Honorable HIRAM W. JOHNSON,*  
*Governor of California.*

There is transmitted to you herewith the findings, recommendations and suggestions as to legislation, of the State Water Problems Conference, created by act of the legislature approved May 18, 1915, which act is as follows:

### CHAPTER 359.

*An act providing for the calling by the governor of a conference on irrigation, reclamation, water storage, flood control, and drainage, and making an appropriation to pay the expenses thereof.*

[Approved May 18, 1915.]

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. For the purpose of considering and recommending a unified state policy with reference to irrigation, reclamation, water storage, flood control, municipalities, and drainage, with due regard to the needs of water power, mining, and navigation, the governor of the state is hereby empowered to call a conference of properly qualified persons, consisting of the lieutenant governor, who shall be chairman thereof, the speaker of the assembly and the chairman of each of the committees of the senate and assembly of the forty-first session of the state legislature on irrigation and on drainage, swamp, and overflowed lands, the state engineer, the chairman of the state water commission, the chairman of the state reclamation board, the chairman of the state conservation commission, the secretary of agriculture, and six others to be appointed by the governor. Such conference shall first meet at the call of the governor, and shall meet thereafter during the years 1915 and 1916 at such times as the chairman shall determine. Not later than November 30, 1916, the conference shall report its findings and conclusions to the governor, together with any recommendations it deems desirable to make regarding legislation; and with the filing of its report with the governor as aforesaid its existence shall cease and determine.

SEC. 2. No member of the conference provided for in this act shall receive any compensation for any work performed in connection therewith other than as already allowed by law; but each member of such conference shall be entitled to receive his actual and necessary traveling expenses incident to attendance at regularly called meetings of the conference or committees thereof; *provided*, that the traveling expenses of the members of the conference who become such members by reason of being members of a state department, board or commission shall be paid

out of the funds appropriated by law for such department, board, or commission. The chairman of the conference is hereby authorized to employ such assistants as he may deem to be requisite to perform the clerical work made necessary by the proper performance of the duties of the conference.

SEC. 3. Out of any moneys in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated there is hereby appropriated the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars to be expended in accordance with law in defraying the expenses herein authorized.



## CHAPTER I.

**Organization and Work of Conference.**

1. The State Water Problems Conference organized under this name, and in accordance with the terms of the act creating it, at the rooms of the State Railroad Commission, San Francisco, on September 18, 1915, Hon. John M. Eshleman, Lieutenant Governor, acting as chairman, as called for by the act, and W. H. Killam being appointed secretary.

2. The personnel of the conference as provided for in the act and by appointment of the Governor, was as follows:

John M. Eshleman.....	Lieutenant Governor
C. C. Young.....	Speaker of the Assembly
L. J. Maddux.....	Chairman, Senate Committee on Irrigation
W. F. Chandler.....	Chairman, Senate Committee on Drainage, Swamp and Overflowed Lands
L. L. Dennett.....	Chairman, Assembly Committee on Irrigation
E. L. Sisson.....	Chairman, Assembly Committee on Drainage, Swamp and Overflowed Lands
W. F. McClure.....	State Engineer
W. A. Johnstone.....	Chairman, State Water Commission
V. S. McClatchy.....	President, State Reclamation Board
J. P. Baumgartner.....	Chairman, State Conservation Commission
R. J. Anderson.....	Redding
W. P. Boone.....	Berkeley
Chas. L. Donohoe.....	Willows
L. J. Edwards.....	Stockton
J. B. Olcese.....	Merced
F. E. Woodley.....	Los Angeles

3. Because of ill health and absence from the state, Lieutenant Governor Eshleman attended only two preliminary meetings of the conference, V. S. McClatchy serving thereafter as chairman pro tem. The subsequent death of Mr. Eshleman deprived the conference even of his advice and counsel—a loss severely felt, for his experience in public life and with state institutions, his familiarity with physical conditions and state problems, his knowledge of the law, his balanced judgment and his untiring energy specially qualified him to direct the responsible work of the conference.

4. It was soon evident to the conference that there had been committed to it a task whose magnitude was perhaps not fully realized by the legislature, for the means and facilities contemplated by the act were entirely inadequate to proper performance of the task. Consideration of the report will furnish ample confirmation of this statement.

5. The act directs that the conference recommend a unified policy with reference to irrigation, reclamation, water storage, flood control, municipalities and drainage, with due regard to the needs of water power, mining and navigation.

6. A preliminary survey of the field disclosed the fact that the water problems of California, concerning which the conference is asked to formulate a unified policy, are greater in number and greater in magnitude than are found in any other state in the Union; that they are in many cases entirely unsolved, and their solution complicated by the absence of a state policy and the growth in consequence of independent rights and antagonistic interests under haphazard legislation.

7. Under the terms of the act ten of the sixteen contemplated as members of the conference are ex officio state officers and the remaining six are citizens in private life appointed by the Governor; no compensation is allowed any member for services; of those who have been active in the work of the conference only one receives a salary from the state; the various members—all busy men of affairs—reside in various portions of the state from Redding to Los Angeles, necessitating loss of time in attending meetings at San Francisco; and the appropriation provided in the act, \$2,500, would defray traveling and other expenses for only a limited number of meetings.

8. Under the circumstances, and with full realization of the gravity of the duty imposed upon it, the conference endeavored to so organize and adjust its work as to secure results, which, while by no means complete, are, it believes, of real value as a basis for the unified policy which is the aim of the act. This could only be done by personal sacrifices on the part of members, an earnest spirit of cooperation, and an endeavor to consider all problems from the state's point of view. In securing such results as are shown in this report, the conference has been materially assisted by aid received from the state administration in supplementing its appropriation; by work of the Legislative Counsel Bureau in preparation of the necessary bills for consideration of the legislature; and by information freely extended by public officials, by public service corporations, by members of the engineering profession and by private citizens.

9. The plan followed by the conference in its work has been as follows:

(a) In order to secure as much reliable data and as many viewpoints on the various problems under consideration as possible, public hearings were held at which representatives of all interests, public or private, concerned in the ownership, use and control of water, were invited to be present and offer their views as to the proper state policy and legislation in connection therewith. In addition, experts in various lines were asked to read papers before

the conference on subjects of which they had most knowledge. Open discussion followed.

(b) The twelve members of the conference who were able to be active in the work were divided into five subcommittees, and to each was assigned a list of topics which were to be investigated by it and reported on. The papers read before the conference and the data received by it were apportioned among these committees according to the subjects of which they treated, to be digested and utilized according to value, in the subcommittee reports.

(c) These subcommittee reports were considered by the full conference, until an agreement could be reached as to principles which the conference was prepared to adopt and policies which it would recommend. In some cases further investigation of a particular topic by the original committee, or by a special committee, was ordered.

(d) With the main facts before it and an agreement on policies reached, the conference named a legislative committee of five and placed in its hands the formulation of the report.

(e) Under direction of the legislative committee the various chapters of the report were prepared by the chairman pro tem. of the conference, or by the chairman of the committee, transmitted to members of the committee by mail, and afterwards modified and amended in meeting of the committee.

(f) The chapters of the report, in the form approved by the legislative committee, were mailed to members of the conference, and, at meetings of the conference, further discussed and amended, and finally approved and adopted.

(g) The bills for presentation to the legislature, intended to carry into effect the policies recommended by the conference, were prepared by the Legislative Counsel Bureau, under direction of the Legislative Committee.

10. Under the plan thus indicated, it has been possible to accomplish much study and work through the industry of individual members at home, and through the meetings of the various subcommittees. In no other way could a report of any value have been offered at this time, with the limited appropriation provided by the act.

11. The conference itself has held meetings of one or two-day sessions as follows: September 18, 1915; October 27, 28; November 29, 30; January 21, 22, 1916; March 23, 24; May 11; May 31, June 1; June 28, 29; November 3; November 15, 16. The transcript of minutes of these meetings is submitted with this report, as are also copies of all papers offered to the conference and various documents considered by the subcommittees.

12. The five subcommittees into whose hands was committed the task of sifting the data collected by the conference and reporting digested