

include that possibility in an evaluation of his motives. However, given his track record to date, it is also important still to be wary of his actions and to question his words.

Whatever his motivates, there is no doubt but that he has skillfully handled public opinion on a delicate subject. By introducing the idea in simplistic, non-confrontational terms, and letting it sift and filter into the public mind, he has managed to split San Francisco and the environmental community and get the environmentalists behind him. (He has even been given a gold colored monkey wrench by environmentalist David Brower.) It costs him nothing to lose San Francisco politically and he can take an effective stab at PG&E, if that is something he desires.

He has made a tantalizing suggestion, one which looks more feasible every day. It is critical that nothing be inadvertently given away or compromised with

respect to other projects in the enthusiasm for this one.

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Hodel's Hetch Hetchy proposal draws criticism and applause

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Since Interior Secretary Donald P. Hodel announced plans to study restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park, battle lines have been drawn between those who favor the proposal and those who oppose it.

But, the proposal has created some unexpected alliances.

Hodel announced his plan in July 1987, joining a battle begun 70 years ago by conservationist John Muir. Although environmental groups have been generally receptive, they remain skeptical

about Hodel's motives.

On the other side, the liberal Democrats of San Francisco have gathered behind the opposition leadership of Mayor Dianne Feinstein, along with Republican Sen. Pete Wilson and Pacific Gas and Electric — strange bedfellows indeed.

Hodel told U.S. News and World Report that "with few exceptions, the major scenic areas are now protected. What's being considered now are ways to better use existing parkland. Consider the Hetch Hetchy dam in California. The decision to flood that valley would be unthinkable today. Behind my idea to drain the reservoir is the

need for additional land in Yosemite to accommodate some of the crowds. You could add a million acres of mountain land there and you wouldn't decrease the crowding in Yosemite Valley. It occurred to me that what you need is a second Yosemite Valley. " U.S. News and World Report, Aug. 31, 1987, Page 51.

San Francisco politicians have traditionally led battles to keep Northern California's water in the north, protecting that precious resource from water-hungry Southerners. Now, those same politicians find themselves protecting what they term their "birthright" and looking decidedly "pro-development."

In reaction to Secretary Hodel's proposal, Mayor Feinstein announced her "unalterable" opposition. In a August 5, 1987, letter to Hodel, she stated, "At a time of diminishing water supply, it would seem the height of folly to dismantle" the Hetch Hetchy system which supplies drinking

water to more than two million people in the Bay area.

She called the system an "irreplaceable birthright left by our forefathers." As well, she announced in a public statement dated the same day that "to exchange precious water for campgrounds seems a very bad trade-off - particularly if life and business depend on that water."

"From so many standpoints, the idea of the federal takeover and destruction of the Hetch Hetchy system simply makes no sense. It's one administration idea that truly belongs in Ollie North's shredder, and I'll do all in my power to fight it," Feinstein said.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released an analysis entitled Hetch Hetchy: Water and Power Replacement Concepts on November 10, 1987. The report stated there are sufficient alternative sources of water for San Francisco, but Mayor Feinstein remains opposed.

In an editorial in the Los Angeles

Times, Feinstein stated, "The splendor of the Hetch Hetchy wilderness remains wonderfully preserved - the works of man only minimally intrusive and the valley open to the public."

Attorneys for San Francisco City and County echo the mayor's feelings, adding that San Francisco holds a "compensable interest" in the system that would have to be addressed by any federalization, according to attorney Tom Berliner.

At the time Hodel announced his plan, Governor George Deukmejian expressed a receptiveness to the idea. Now, his office is refusing all comment on the proposal.

On the other hand, U.S. Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., stated the proposal "sounds like John Muir's dream come true." While backing the Republican Hodel, Cranston also noted that any "plan must fully compensate San Francisco and provide equal water quality and power."

On the other side of the political

fence, U.S. Sen Pete Wilson, R-Calif., is backing Feinstein's fight against the proposal. Wilson's field representative Jack Marshall said the senator is in support of Feinstein's position, and he hopes Hodel will take into account other factors besides simply rebuilding the valley.

After release of the Bureau of Reclamation analysis, Wilson reiterated his opposition. Kevin Elliott, another Wilson field representative, said, "Sen. Wilson flatly opposes the secretary's plan to tear down Hetch Hetchy dam. There is a very substantive legal issue over water rights:

"A) The water belongs to San Francisco;

"B) The water belongs to San Francisco;

"and C) it's a bad idea and will never happen."

Congressman Robert Matsui, D-Sacramento, announced on November 18, 1987, that he is opposed to restoring Hetch Hetchy Valley if the

plan also calls for diverting American River water to San Francisco.

Matsui said the Bureau of Reclamation analysis which raises the American River as a possible alternate source of water for the Bay area would cheat Sacramentans of drinking water and Californians of recreational opportunities, according to a Sacramento Bee article on November 19, 1987. Matsui wrote to Secretary Hodel asking for withdrawal of the American River from the proposal because "there are more demands for the American River than there is water to meet those demands."

A Matsui spokesman told the Sacramento Bee that the letter does not mean that the Sacramento Democrat is opposed to restoring the valley. He is only against doing so at the expense of the American River.

Congressman Tony Coelho, D-Modesto, whose district includes Hetch Hetchy, is not commenting on the proposal until he sees more definite plans from the De-

partment of the Interior, according to his aide Chris Chiammes.

On the side of environmental groups, there is a cautious optimism about Hodel's proposal, along with a healthy amount of skepticism.

Jim Eaton, executive director of the California Wilderness Coalition said, "We've always been in favor of draining the reservoir - going back 10 years when we testified in favor of that during the Yosemite hearings. But, as to what Hodel's up to, we're not sure."

Eaton said there is "a lot of speculation" about Hodel's motives, including that "it might be a way to get Dianne Feinstein's mind off of coastal drilling. It's also nice (for Hodel) to have the Democrats in San Francisco running around being against the environment for a change."

The only problem Eaton sees with the plan is the revenue San Francisco earns from selling Hetch Hetchy electricity and water. Eaton said



water shortage is not an issue, "the water is still in the river and can be pulled out. But revenue is what they have to worry about because they make a lot of money there."

The Sierra Club was formed in the 1890s to continue the fight to protect Yosemite Valley. A creation of John Muir, the Sierra Club's worst defeat is believed to be the loss of Hetch Hetchy Valley. Now, the club is cautiously backing the proposal to restore what Muir referred to as "Tuolumne Yosemite" and others termed "The Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne."

In the November/December 1987 issue of SIERRA magazine,

the Sierra Club examined Hodel's proposal and the possible motivations behind it.

Carl Pope, the Sierra Club's deputy director of conservation, explained in the article that the organization favors the idea no matter what its origin. He noted that although Hodel may be trying to split San Francisco's traditional alliance with the club, that won't happen because disagreements over Hetch Hetchy Valley haven't disrupted that alliance even though the two have disagreed over the valley since 1906.

Pope hypothesized that Hodel may be trying to avoid a public image akin to former Secretary of

the Interior James Watt by proposing the plan, or that Hetch Hetchy may simply be a good place to take a pro-conservation stance.

The Sierra Club echoes others in stating water availability should not be an obstacle for the plan — the same amount of water will still be coming down the Tuolumne River and could be harnessed in other downstream storage facilities. Pope states that the Tuolumne has more excess reservoir capacity than almost any other river in the state.

While San Francisco's electrical power generation is a tougher question, Pope asks why San Francisco should

be able to make a \$50 million a year profit off of a dam in a national park anyway — a question conservationists have been asking since the Raker Act was passed by Congress in 1913 allowing San Francisco to build its dam and flood the valley.

Although the Sierra Club has questions about the motivations, there is no doubt it favors the plan and is happy public debate has begun.

In a column published in the December 3, 1987, Sacramento Bee, conservative George Will termed Hodel's idea as "expressing almost heroic indifference to mere practicality." Will said the idea, coming at a time of fiscal distress in Washington, D.C., was probably designed more to shake up San Francisco politicians and environmentalists than as something serious.

Will wrote, "Secretary Donald Hodel is having Second-Term Fun. His idea for dismantling a dam and draining

Hetch Hetchy reservoir is the sort of thing that can only be thought in a president's second term, when fatigue has everyone feeling a bit flaky and they don't mind raising some dust."

Whether meant seriously or not, Hodel's idea has state level politicians thinking — but often not commenting.

State Sen. Ken Maddy, R-Fresno County, is not discussing the proposal. His research assistant Jan Carter said she was still gathering information for the senator to consider in mid-November.

Assemblyman Bill Jones, R-Tulare Co., is in the process of working on the proposal. Because Jones' district covers Hetch Hetchy Valley, he was asked by Hodel to serve on a task force examining the proposal.

"I don't support the concept, but I want to participate in the process," Jones said in an interview on November 10, 1987. "Originally, people in Sacramento involved in

the North-South water controversies saw this as a way to get San Francisco to the bargaining table" but now the proposal is getting a different examination at the state level. Initially, the proposal wasn't taken seriously, he said, but it is now getting some consideration.

Jones was emphatic that Hodel's plan "should not be considered a good idea. When we're short of water, it doesn't make sense to tear down an existing dam. I don't support this idea at all."

Although sympathetic to environmental concerns, Jones said, "I don't think its critical we have that valley. I'm sure Hetch Hetchy would be a beautiful valley, but we've been putting more property into wilderness already."

The Tulare County assemblyman said he "can hardly believe this proposal at all, myself. Its a questionable idea at best and suffice it to say I'm opposed to it."

The California State Water Resources

Board is refusing to comment on the proposal, saying it is not within their jurisdiction and they are referring questions to the Department of Water Resources.

After examining the Bureau of Reclamation's draft report, California Department of Water Resources spokesman

Bob Miller said it "seems to be very objective and realistic", but qualified that by stressing that the bureau did not make specific proposals, only suggestions.

Miller said that while the report is only a superficial study, the alternatives suggested appear to be worthy of

further study though they may prove to be unfeasible for environmental or economic reasons. The state has recently studied is the possibility of enlarging Shasta Dam. The price is estimated at \$3 billion and the dam would not be feasible as a source of increased water or power "until probably sometime in the 21st century."

