

Statement on Signing the Griffith Project Prepayment and Conveyance Act *July 26, 2000*

Today I have signed into law S. 986, the “Griffith Project Prepayment and Conveyance Act,” a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Griffith Project to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA).

This legislation is consistent with Administration policy of transferring certain facilities to private water districts where it is more efficient for the nonfederal entity to manage the project. I am pleased that the Congress addressed many Administration concerns with earlier versions of this legislation. For example, the bill clarifies questions regarding the lands to be transferred and eligibility for future benefits for Bureau of Reclamation programs.

I am disappointed that the bill directs rather than authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to convey the facilities of the Project. My Administration believes that prior to transferring title, the Secretary should conduct a meaningful National Environmental Policy Act analysis so that the Department, the Congress, and the public can fully understand the impacts of the proposed transfer, its alternatives, and potential mitigation measures. My Administration continues to oppose such mandatory provisions in transfer bills. However, because of the cooperative efforts with the SNWA and the progress made to date in the environmental review, the Department of the Interior indicates that it believes that the process can be satisfactorily completed with regard to this Project.

In signing S. 986, I state my interpretation that section 5(c) of the bill, which provides that nothing in the Act shall transfer or affect Federal ownership, rights, or interest in Lake Mead National Recreation Area associated lands, nor affect the authorities of the National Park Service to manage the Area, read together with section 3(b)(2), makes clear that no interests in real property would transfer to the SNWA other than the right-of-way that is reasonably necessary for the Authority to operate, maintain, replace, and repair the Griffith Project, as constituted on the date of enactment of this Act. Further, notwithstanding language in the bill that provides that the right-of-way shall be “at no cost,” the Federal Government is not prevented from seeking reimbursement for expenditures associated with implementing this Act and protecting the resources of Lake Mead National Recreation Area when rights-of-way are established.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 26, 2000.

NOTE: S. 986, approved July 26, was assigned Public Law No. 106–249. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 27.

Radio Remarks on Restoration of the Wild Salmon of the Pacific Northwest *July 27, 2000*

Today my administration is proposing a comprehensive strategy to bring back the wild salmon of the Pacific Northwest. We’ll pursue a practical course that will help both the economy and the environment. Congress must also do its part by fully funding my salmon restoration budget, and the people of the Pacific Northwest must be prepared to take the necessary steps. Only in partnership with State and tribal govern-

ments and other stakeholders can we restore the salmon without resorting to costlier measures. I welcome the recommendations of the region’s Governors and look forward to working together to ensure our success.

NOTE: The President’s remarks were recorded at 2:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for immediate broadcast. These remarks were also