UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE — Most or Flanagan - Int. 5634

For Release OCTOBER 7, 1962

INTERIOR TO INTERVENE IN NEW DON PEDRO, CALIFORNIA, RESERVOIR PROJECT HEARING

To safeguard an average annual run of about 40,000 chinook salmon in California's Tuolumne River, the Department of the Interior has announced its intention to intervene in a Federal Power Commission hearing on a license application for the proposed Don Pedro dam and reservoir project near La Grange, Calif.

The salmon are an important interstate and international fishery resource, supporting sport and commercial fisheries, not only in California waters, but also in the Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and, probably southern Alaska, the Department said.

Studies by the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service indicate that the new Don Pedro project, as proposed, would jeopardize the fish runs unless minimum flows downstream are guaranteed by the license applicants, the Turlock and Modesto Irrigation Districts. The project, in addition to producing hydroelectric power, will supply municipal water to the City of San Francisco for marketing to localities and communities outside the city.

The application for a license to construct the dam was filed with the Federal Power Commission over a year ago. Since then, the California Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Wildlife Service have held discussions with the applicants to try and reach a compromise that would allow the project to be constructed and still maintain the valuable fishery. This fishery annually produces approximately one million pounds of commercial salmon and provides 36,000 man-days of sport fishing.

Under the terms requested in the application by the irrigation districts it would be possible to remove all the water from the Tuolumne River in dry years.

Negotiators from the California Fish and Game Department, the City and County of San Francisco, and the irrigation districts did draft a proposed agreement on the problem subject to ratification by their governing bodies. This agreement, however, was rejected as inadequate by the California Fish and Game Commission at its meeting July 20, 1962. Following this rejection, the Federal Power Commission scheduled a hearing on the project for October 16, 1962 in San Francisco.

The Department of the Interior has now started action to intervene formally in the case and to participate in the hearing in order to present license conditions to protect adequately the fishery resources of the Tuolumne River.

x x x

P.N. 16232-62