

Keynote Address



Wayne Owens, president, Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation.

The recommendation concerning desalination in the Mid-east came from the conference's keynote speaker, Wayne Owens, president of the Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation. The former Utah Congressman, who had just returned from the Middle East, stressed that desalination could be a major factor in facilitating a permanent peace agreement.

Special thanks to those who helped draft the Desalination Recommendations.

They include the following: Dr. James Birkett, West Neck Strategies; Werner Fornos, The Population Institute; Peter Gleick, the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security; Mark Hammond, Southwest Florida Water Management District; Peter Hofmann, Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation; Gordon Leitner, International Desalination and Water Reuse Quarterly; Andrew Macoun, The World Bank; Kevin Price, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; Glenn Stout, past president of the International Water Resources Association; William Warren, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency; Ian Watson, AEPI/RosTek, Inc.; and Floyd Wicks, American States Water Company.



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Global Water Crisis Recommendations



Created through the two-day symposium:
The Role of Desalination in Averting a Global Water Crisis

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Southern Illinois University
Carbondale

Presented by:

The SIU Public Policy Institute
The International Water
Resources Association

The Challenge

As global population passes the 6 billion mark, the world is rapidly moving towards widespread shortages of freshwater. Global water use has increased five-fold this century and today's per capita availability is predicted to decline by 1/3 over the next generation. Water shortages are rapidly emerging. We are already failing to meet the most basic water requirements of billions of people. Since 97% of the world's water is seawater, and almost 70% of the world's population lives within fifty miles of the ocean, greater research on and development of less expensive means of seawater desalination should be an urgent priority.



Peter Gleick of the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security; Paul Simon, SIU Public Policy Institute.

"In the next 40 to 90 years, the world population will increase dramatically, but our water supply will not increase," Paul Simon, director of the SIU Public Policy Institute, noted. "Nations have gone to war over oil. They almost certainly will go to war over water if we don't take significant action now. A key component of our strategy to head off this looming catastrophe must be to make seawater fit for public consumption."

The Recommendations

- ◆ Encourage Congress and the White House to follow through on desalination and other efforts referred to by President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak in a joint statement focused on ways to foster a permanent peace in the Middle East. Desalination



Kevin Price, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; Dr. Jim Birkett, West Neck Strategies; Gordon Leitner, Water Reuse and Desalination Quarterly

of waters from the Mediterranean and Red sea is viewed by experts as a way to further the Mideast peace process by easing significant water conflicts. We urge multi-national development and regional cooperation on desalination and other water problems by Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and other nations in the Middle East.

- ◆ Call for a United Nations resolution by the General Assembly that countries devote 5 percent of what they spend now on weapons research or 1 percent of what they spend on defense to increase their efforts to meet basic water supply and sanitation needs.
- ◆ Encourage international mechanisms to resolve disputes over access to water.
- ◆ Provide financial incentives to the private sector when it conducts research and demonstration on new and improved desalination.
- ◆ Press for greater commitment to energy research in desalination – including promising areas such as developing a better understanding of how plants desalt water and use of solar and wind energy.
- ◆ Intensify efforts to stabilize global population growth through voluntary family planning. With world population now exceeding 6 billion people, it becomes increasingly important that we achieve a balance among population, the resource base of the planet and its environment. Population growth not only taxes water resources but also can create plague-producing public health conditions that are often water-related.

- ◆ Encourage the Department of Defense to continue funding advanced research into desalination and other water technologies in order to protect our present and future security interests.
- ◆ Encourage water districts to have a 1 percent voluntary taxation that would fund further research and development into desalination and other means of solving water supply and demand problems.
- ◆ Reauthorize and expand the Water Desalination Research Act to provide appropriate resources and encourage the administration and Congress to appropriate fully the authorized funding; to establish a productive program of research and development and demonstration; to transfer the results of this work through international bi-annual technology transfer symposia, and to establish a funded expert panel to properly evaluate new concepts.



Andrew Macoun, The World Bank