MEMORANDUM

To: Director, Operations
   Attention: W-6000
   Regional Director, PN, MP, LC, UC, GP
   Attention: PN-1000, MP-100, LC-1000, UC-100, GP-1000
   Chief, Dam Safety Office
   Attention: D-6600
   All Area Managers

From: Eluid L. Martinez
       Commissioner

Subject: Public Affairs Involvement in Emergency Management Activities

During both the Folsom Gate failure and the flooding of the powerplant at Flaming Gorge, our regional public affairs officers played a crucial role by providing guidance for the handling of media coordination and public information. Their proactive approach helped ensure that accurate stories were provided in a very short timeframe, reducing possible public overreaction and controlling rumors. Public affairs participation also allowed management and support personnel to complete needed work without interruption.

Pre-planning for such emergencies is an important part of Reclamation's mission. Our present emergency management policy calls for Area and Regional Offices to implement a program that addresses our responses to incidents affecting public safety or environmental resources at each high-risk facility. A major part of this policy is the review and exercise of Emergency Action Plans. Public information and media coordination play a major role in these activities. A public affairs component, as stated in this memo, will be included in the directives for emergency management (FAC-01-01 Section 3).

Therefore, I am asking that, beginning immediately, public affairs personnel be involved in review and exercise activities for each high-risk facility. In addition to reviewing the public information/media sections of each facility's Emergency Action Plan, a public affairs officer or a designated representative should participate in all tabletop and functional exercises. A regional public affairs person may perform this duty or the Area Manager may designate, in consultation with the Regional Public Affairs Officer, a member of their staff to serve as the public
I also suggested that a public affairs officer or representative serve as a consultant or member of the team responsible for designing each exercise. Their guidance will help ensure that public information/media coordination is considered when developing the exercise scenario, that the exercise is realistic, and that participation of public information specialists from other agencies is encouraged. That person will also be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the public information/media components of the exercise. To ensure an effective exercise and review of the Emergency Action Plan, the public affairs representative serving on the design team should not be the same as the public affairs person participating in the exercise. Regional, Denver or Washington Office public affairs staff may be called upon to serve as design team members.

The importance of proactive crisis management cannot be overstated. By employing the expertise of Reclamation's many different specialists, we can do our best to prepare for an effective emergency response.

bc: Regional Director, Boise, Idaho
    Attention: PN-1200
    Regional Director, Sacramento, California
    Attention: MP-140
    Regional Director, Boulder City, Nevada
    Attention: LC-1140
    Regional Director, Salt Lake City, Utah
    Attention: UC-220
    Regional Director, Billings, Montana
    Attention: GP-140
    D-5010, W-1500, W-1540(2), W-1543, W-1130

WBR: CKempcomm:12/10/97
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