FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 3, 1951

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF TELEGRAM TO CHAIRMAN CHARLES A. BUCKLEY OF THE HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE RELEASED JOINTLY BY SENATOR HERBERT H. LEHMAN (DEM., N.Y.) AND REPRESENTATIVE EMANUEL CELLER (DEM., N.Y.)

"Chairman Burton of the New York Power Authority sent us copies of a telegram he addressed to you on the subject of legislation which your Committee may shortly again consider to authorize the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project.

"We would like you to know that for our part we hope that your Committee will see fit to include in this legislation provision similar to Section 5 of former St. Lawrence proposals, providing for transfer of power facilities to New York State subject to agreement between New York State and the Federal Government containing safeguards to protect the interests of New York consumers, of the national defense, and of other states. We believe New York State should be permitted to operate these facilities in the public interest, the national interest, and the interest of power consumers.

"However, we must point out that the New York Power Authority, as it was reconstituted by Governor Dewey in 1950, bears full responsibility for confusing the issue and raising doubts in the minds of many members of Congress as to the intentions and designs of New York State authorities with regard to this power.

"For twenty years, the New York State Power Authority has supported the arrangement whereby New York State would obtain control of St. Lawrence power facilities under the terms of an agreement worked out between the Federal Government and New York State and which had the sanction of tradition. Presidents Roosevelt and Truman steadfastly supported this arrangement. This year, as a result of clear demonstration of the importance of the St. Lawrence Seaway to our national defense, there has been and still is a real prospect of getting this legislation through Congress, bringing the great benefits of power development to our citizens.

"But the New York Power Authority, with no real concern for the development of the project itself, suddenly reversed twenty years of tradition and denounced the arrangement which had long represented the best thinking of state and federal officials alike.

"Although there had been pressures upon the National Administration to withdraw its support for this arrangement, so advantageous to New York State, the Administration, recognizing the special claims of New York State and on the urging of New York's representatives in Congress, remained firm.

"The New York Power Authority, however, turned turtle and conjured up an entirely new proposal, divested of safeguards of the public interest, which inspired fear in many quarters that the New York Power Authority proposed to sell
out the public interest and serve as a handmaiden for private utility interests in turning this power over to them, at the bus bar. The St. Lawrence power, a public birthright, would thus be used for private profit at public expense.

"The references made by Chairman Burton in his telegram to you, to the Lehman-Roosevelt Bill on the Niagara Project betrays the political basis of Chairman Burton's position. There is no connection between the St. Lawrence proposal and the Niagara proposal, except in the fact that in the Niagara proposal, too, the New York Power Authority is doing its best to block all action and keep the power project on the shelf, rather than permit this project to be constructed in the public interest.

"I hope you will understand, being from New York, and will convey to the Committee, our strong view that Chairman Burton does not speak for the people of New York. They have showed in the past, and will show again if the occasion arises, that they want the precious heritage of these water resources developed in the public interest, for the benefit of the many, of the national defense, and not the few.

"We hope you can persuade the Committee to insert in this legislation provisions analogous to Section 5 of former St. Lawrence proposals, which, we repeat, provides for transfer of power facilities to New York State subject to agreement between New York State and the Federal Government containing safeguards to protect the interests of New York consumers, of the national defense, and of other states. We know you will do your best along this line. But the national interest, including the interest of New York State, requires that this project be authorized and constructed without further delay.

"The national defense requires it. The national interest requires it. The interests of the people of New York require it.

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