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Provided to the House Natural Resources Committee on Natural Resources

Subcommittee on Water and Power

Hearing on H.R. 254 - Bonneville Unit Clean Hydropower Facilitation Act

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Napolitano and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the Strawberry Water Users Association (SWUA) we want to thank you for allowing us to provide written testimony in support of H.R. 254, the Bonneville Unit Clean Hydropower Facilitation Act. We also appreciate your expediting consideration of this bill which we had all thought would have passed and been signed into law in the final days of the last Congress.

H.R. 254 opens the door to hydropower development in the Diamond Fork System of the Central Utah Project (CUP), a portion of the CUP shared with the Strawberry Valley Project (SVP). Diamond Fork power would not be practicable without passage of H.R. 254.

Diamond Fork power will produce clean energy by harnessing the power of our SVP and CUP water which is already carried in the Diamond Fork System. The reason SVP and CUP water is carried in the pipe that makes-up the Diamond Fork System is to protect natural streams from erosion.

Today the tremendous energy of falling project water is being wasted, in part as the result of federal red tape that produces illogical results. H.R. 254 will remove those barriers, allowing this clean renewable Diamond Fork energy to be developed which will produce not only power, but jobs.

Currently, no revenues of any kind are being produced from Diamond Fork power and therefore, no funds are going to the federal government. When Diamond Fork is developed, a portion of the power revenues will go to the Federal Government.

With passage of H.R. 254, a portion of the power revenue will flow to the federal government. No federal dollars, and no tax-exempt bonding, will be used in the construction of Diamond Fork power facilities. This truly is a win win for everyone involved. We appreciate Congressman Chaffetz and the rest of the Utah Congressional Delegation very much for their leadership on this important legislation.

We would also like to express public appreciation to the Central Utah Water Conservancy District and Don Christiansen for their thoughtfulness and leadership on this issue as well. SVP and CUP have much to gain from the completion of this important project and we look forward to continuing to work with them to bring this project to completion.

When the two projects and the federal government sat down to negotiate the sharing of project facilities, both parties were clear that opportunities for the SVP's development of power, using SVP water, would not be impaired by reason of SVP water being carried in the Diamond Fork System for the benefit of the environment. We are appreciative of the ongoing commitment that will assure SWUA that we will be rightfully compensated for our property right.

That strong commitment is reflected in paragraph 19 of the 1991 Contract that governs the sharing of CUP facilities by both SVP and CUP. That commitment is also reflected in the Opinion of the Regional Solicitor dated July 30, 1986. We are also very grateful for Don Christiansen's personal public reiteration of that commitment during discussions that lead to SWUA's full support for this legislation in the last Congress and continues today.

Mr. Chairman, we very much appreciate your leadership in holding this hearing and that of Congressman Chaffetz on this important issue and look forward to working with you as this bill moves forward in the legislative process.