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Opening Statement
The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman

House Committee on Natural Resources

At the Water and Power Subcommittee Oversight Hearing on
"Examining the Proposed Fiscal Year 2014 Spending, Priorities and the Missions of the
Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Geological Survey's Water Resources program and the Four
Power Marketing Administrations"
Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I've often stated, the agencies under the jurisdiction of the Water and Power Subcommittee have a profound and direct impact on the Central Washington district I represent. Two of the largest federal irrigation projects in the West, as well as the Grand Coulee Dam, the largest producer of hydropower in the U.S., are in my district. Together, they serve as the heart of Central Washington's economy and way of life.

Central Washington is living proof of surface storage's multiple benefits. Dams and reservoirs continue to capture water in good times to provide water even in times of drought. Desert has been transformed into some of the most productive farmland in the world and our region has the cheapest and cleanest source of green power known to mankind – hydropower

Two of the agencies managing some of these resources are before us today. They have served our region and our country admirably for generations, but they are being challenged repeatedly by litigation, new agendas that undermine their historic missions as outlined in Secretary Chu's Memorandum and other factors. The end result of these factors is a negative environment for those who are served by these agencies. Examples of this are the manmade drought that is once again happening in California's San Joaquin Valley and higher water and electricity prices throughout the West.

The Pacific Northwest has its own set of issues, including but not limited to never-ending and successive Biological Opinions on the operation of several major Northwest federal dams, an expansive set of programs for salmon recovery funded largely by Northwest ratepayers, the upcoming expiration of the Columbia River Treaty, the need for new storage, and wind integration to name a few. On the latter topic, I take note there is a serious matter going on right now about who will pay for the modernization of the John Keys pumping plant at Grand Coulee Dam. This facility has faced significant stress in recent years as it has been used to integrate

more wind into BPA's power grid, in addition to its original use to pump water into the Columbia Basin Project. It is my hope that it will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, not just the federal agencies.

We are privileged to have a number of witnesses who are relatively new to their jobs. One of which is Mr. Bill Drummond, the new Administrator for the Bonneville Power Administration. You have your set of challenges ahead of you and I stand ready to work with you.

In conclusion, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this important hearing since this is the only Subcommittee in this Congress that will hear directly from these agencies on their budgets and the missions within them.