

Statement of William E. Rinne  
Acting Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Before the House Resources Committee  
Subcommittee on Water and Power

HR 6014

September 7, 2006

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittee, I am William E. Rinne, Acting Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation. I appreciate the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on HR 6014. This legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to transfer \$10 million annually to the State of California's Delta Flood Protection Fund through fiscal 2012. The Department does not support HR 6014.

HR 6014 authorizes a direct transfer of Federal funds to the state program created by California Water Code section 12300 (a). California's Flood Control Subventions Program, as it is known, is a program through which the State of California provides reimbursable funding to local agencies for levee maintenance and improvements. While Interior commends efforts by the State to provide assistance to local agencies to improve and rehabilitate the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta levees, we do not support this bill requiring the pass-through of funds from the Bureau of Reclamation for this purpose. HR 6014 raises many jurisdictional, budgetary and administrative questions for Reclamation.

These questions arise in major part because, by requiring Reclamation funding for levee maintenance and improvements, HR 6014 would expand Reclamation's role in California beyond its core mission of providing water and power. The bill will compete with other Department of the Interior programs for funds, placing further constraints on Reclamation's ability to respond to mission objectives. Other priorities include facility maintenance and improvements required to keep up with new environmental mandates and aging infrastructure.

To the extent that there is a Federal role in the rehabilitation of levees, in California this function is served by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps is the lead Federal agency for levee improvements, including Delta levees. This relationship is confirmed in the landmark CALFED legislation (P.L.108-361) signed in 2004. The CALFED Act authorizes the Secretary of the Army to expend \$90 million for construction and implementation of levee stability projects for flood control, ecosystem restoration, water supply, water conveyance, and water quality objectives. The existing authorization of this \$90 million should help the Corps to support the objectives that the sponsor is seeking to achieve with this legislation. The Corps' efforts under the CALFED Levee Stability Program are in partnership with the State of California Departments of Water Resources and Fish and Game (DWR, DFG), local Reclamation Districts, and other concerned stakeholders.

We note that the Corps is actively working with the State on near- and long-term solutions to protect California's Delta levees. A current high priority activity led by the Corps and DWR, called the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS), is evaluating on-going and future risk of levee failure; identifying the probable consequences; and identifying levee rehabilitation and upgrades that are necessary and economically justified to reduce controllable risk. Data gained from this study will help establish the priorities for actions to reduce the risk associated with catastrophic levee failure in the Delta. For more immediate actions regarding Delta levee protection, the Corps completed a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Report identifying and prioritizing potential levee stability projects in the Delta.

In light of the concerns I have expressed, the Department cannot support HR 6014. Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate my appreciation to the Subcommittee and others for continuing to work with the Administration to address the significant water issues facing California. That concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions.