

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
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INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE  
POLITICAL/LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT  
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS**

**ON**

**H.R. 2060 – CENTRAL OREGON JOBS AND WATER SECURITY ACT**

**BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**JUNE 23, 2011**

Good morning, Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Napolitano, distinguished members of the Water and Power Subcommittee. My name is Dan Gardner and I am the international representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, IBEW. Thank you for the opportunity for me to speak with you today regarding our views on H.R. 2060, the Central Oregon Jobs and Water Security Act. I am speaking to you today on behalf of my colleagues from IBEW Local 280 in Salem, Oregon, the local union with jurisdiction in this area, who strongly support this legislation. IBEW represents 725,000 union electricians nationally with approximately 1,150 of those electricians part of IBEW Local 280.

Our electricians are very proud of the work they do. Regardless of how large or small a project may be, IBEW electricians take pride in ensuring their work is of the highest quality for the customer. There is a sense of ownership in the work our members accomplish day in and day out.

Central Oregon is uniquely situated for several industries, be it agricultural, industrial, high tech or tourism. The draw to the region continues to grow and ensuring the region has the necessary resources, including water and energy resources, is paramount to its success. H.R. 2060, the Central Oregon Jobs and Water Security Act, is a sensible solution to help with job creation and economic recovery in central Oregon while ensuring natural resources are available for growth and development.

H.R. 2060 addresses two barriers to job creation and the road to recovery in Central Oregon. First, it allows an additional seven cubic feet, bringing the total up to 17 cubic feet per second, of water to be released from the Crooked River and the Bowman Dam for use by the City. The additional cubic feet will yield more than 5,100 acre feet of water annually, allowing for additional water in the city's ground water. Second, H.R. 2060 seeks to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and moves the designation line of where the Scenic River designation begins downstream, below the dam, compared to in the middle of the dam as it is currently. This shift would allow for hydroelectric projects to occur along the Crooked River at the Bowman Dam, increasing clean power generation in central Oregon. These two small changes will bring tremendous benefit to an economy hard hit by the current recession.

What type of benefits to central Oregon are we talking about with these two changes? The social media company Facebook recently completed construction and activated a data center facility for housing servers to run its operation. Facebook was drawn to Prineville because of climate and a reliable power supply. For Prineville and the surrounding areas, these types of projects are good news because it means jobs. Good, family wage jobs. The construction of the facility employed

over two hundred construction workers and now employs some 35 Oregonians for the operation and maintenance of the data center.

In order to ensure the facility met the necessary capacity, IBEW Local 280 worked with the Bonneville Power Administration, Oregon Senator Ron Wyden, IBEW Local 125 and others to understand the requirements to bring the project online. The quality and dedication demonstrated by IBEW members showed upon completion of the project. Once the data center became operational, Facebook was extremely satisfied with the professionalism and the quality of work done by IBEW electricians throughout the project.

Before the Facebook project came along, there were several months where half of the Local's workforce was without work. IBEW Local 280 is currently facing 30 percent unemployment with an additional 10 to 15 percent of those members who are working less than a full 40-hour work week. The success of the Facebook project has caught the eye of other companies looking to build in Prineville.

The Crooked River and Bowman Dam are prime candidates for hydropower development. This development cannot occur due to the designations of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act boundaries. Altering the designation by just one-quarter of a mile will allow for the development of the dam. Utility companies have already expressed interest in creating, a small-scale six-megawatt hydropower facility. Such a project would employ over 50 construction workers for more than two years and provide more than 4,500 homes with clean energy.

Mr. Chairman, as of May of this year, Oregon was still higher than the national average on unemployment, currently at 9.3 percent. Crook County, where the City of Prineville is, currently has the state's highest unemployment of 15.3 percent. Furthermore, a study released on June 20 by IHS Global Insight, an economic forecasting firm, noted that the greater Bend area of central Oregon will not see a jobs comeback until 2021. Crook County and the City of Prineville are neighbors and in my view looking at the same timeline for recovery without this important job creating legislation.

The bottom line is that H.R. 2060 is a sensible way to help create jobs in one of the hardest struck areas in the western United States. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to address the subcommittee today and I am happy to answer any questions you or members of the subcommittee may have.