

DOC HASTINGS, WA
CHAIRMAN
DON YOUNG, AK
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TN
LOUIE GOHMERT, TX
ROB BISHOP, UT
DOUG LAMBORN, CO
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VA
PAUL C. BROUN, GA
JOHN FLEMING, LA
MIKE COFFMAN, CO
TOM McCLINTOCK, CA
GLENN THOMPSON, PA
JEFF DENHAM, CA
DAN BENISHK, MI
DAVID RIVERA, FL
JEFF DUNCAN, SC
SCOTT R. TIPTON, CO
PAUL A. GOSAR, AZ
RAUL R. LABRADOR, ID
KRISTI L. NOEM, SD
STEVE SOUTHERLAND II, FL
BILL FLORES, TX
ANDY HARRIS, MD
JEFFREY M. LANDRY, LA
CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN, TN
JON RUNYAN, NJ
BILL JOHNSON, OH

TODD YOUNG
CHIEF OF STAFF

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MA
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER
DALE E. KILDEE, MI
PETER A. DEFAZIO, OR
ENI F.H. FALOMVAEAGA, AS
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NJ
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, CA
RUSH D. HOLT, NJ
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, AZ
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GU
JIM COSTA, CA
DAN BOREN, OK
GREGORIO KILLI CAMACHO SABLÁN, CNMI
MARTIN HEINRICH, NM
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NM
JOHN P. SARBANES, MD
BETTY SUTTON, OH
NIKI TSONGAS, MA
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PR
JOHN GARAMENDI, CA
COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, HI

JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

Opening Statement by
The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
Before the Water and Power Subcommittee Legislative Hearing on
H.R. 1837, "The San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act"
Thursday, June 2, 2011
10:00 a.m.

Water and agriculture are the economic foundation of the communities I represent in Congress. From the Yakima Valley to the Columbia Basin, water is the lifeblood. This is also very true in the Central Valley of California. Today's hearing is another step towards avoiding future man-made droughts specifically in the San Joaquin Valley.

This hearing follows the Water and Power Subcommittee's recent field hearing to investigate how regulation and litigation caused the man-made water shortages in the San Joaquin Valley. I had the opportunity to attend that field hearing to hear firsthand accounts of how water losses led to massive unemployment and community upheaval.

I attended the field hearing not only because of my interest in resolving the issue, but also over my concern that if a man-made drought could happen in one of the most agriculturally productive regions of the world, then it could happen anywhere; in our nation.

This Subcommittee visited Fresno at a time when Mother Nature has been providing California and much of the West with abundant water, presumably resolving this issue yet, the field hearing was still packed with many concerned that a man-made drought could re-occur if we let history repeat itself.

It's our duty to make sure that doesn't happen. Although Republicans tried over the last two years to end the food lines and get people back to work at no cost to the taxpayer, we were not even allowed by the Democrat majority to debate the merits of returning water to farmers and their nearby communities.

Those days are over. Our colleagues, Devin Nunes, Kevin McCarthy and Jeff Denham, have put forth a credible effort to help resolve many of the longstanding water issues we heard about over the last two years. They have deliberately listened to their constituents and stepped up to the plate to offer a solution to tackle many of the water problems facing California.

There will be many – including those with extreme agendas that make a living in the courts to hijack water projects – that will oppose their effort. Yet, those same groups and individuals have done little other than obstruct and create the situation we have before us today. I challenge those opposing this bill and those who have sat on their hands for two years to put something meaningful on the table instead of acting like obstructionist.

I want to commend Mr. Nunes, Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Denham for taking the first step on righting the regulatory wrongs of the past and in providing long-term jobs for communities that have been sacrificed for too long on behalf of a three-inch fish. I look forward to working with my colleagues on future consideration of this bill.