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

**Opening Statement by**  
**The Honorable Tom McClintock**  
**Chairman**

**House Water and Power Subcommittee**

**Oversight Hearing on**

***"Creating Abundant Water and Power Supplies and Job Growth  
by Restoring Common Sense to Federal Regulations"***

**April 5, 2011**

Today's hearing is conducted pursuant to House Resolution 72 which directs all committees of the House to identify current and pending regulations that threaten existing jobs or impede the creation of new ones.

This sub-committee, with jurisdiction over water and hydro-electric resources administered by the Bureau of Reclamation, will have its hands full in meeting this obligation.

In Southern Oregon, regulators have devastated Klamath Valley agriculture and now threaten to squander \$700 million of ratepayer and taxpayer funds to destroy four hydroelectric dams capable of producing 155 megawatts of clean and cheap electricity – and to shut down operation of the Iron Gate Fish Hatchery that produces five million salmon smolt annually.

Last year, this government diverted 200 billion gallons of water away from Central Valley farms in California to dump into the Pacific Ocean for "habitat restoration," destroying a quarter million acres of the most productive farmland in the nation, throwing tens of thousands of farm families into unemployment and contributing to unemployment rates in the Central Valley exceeding 40 percent in some communities.

Even today, with snowpack at 165 percent of normal for the season – the wettest year in the last 16 – San Joaquin Valley farmers have only been guaranteed 65 percent of their contracted allotments.

Family farms on the Rio Grande in New Mexico faced extinction to provide nicer accommodations for silvery minnows until its delegation found the political will to act a few years ago. Just over the horizon, the Santa Ana sucker fish in southern California could have devastating impacts on residents seeking to protect local water supplies.

Across the nation, the EPA has waged an assault on rural America by imposing greenhouse gas regulations that will destroy small livestock operations, creating unjustified

buffer zones on pesticide applications and opposing surface storage projects like the Two Forks reservoir in Colorado.

The great irony, of course, is that the very projects that have made sustained year-round water flows possible and that have lowered water temperatures to the benefit of fish populations annually are precisely those under attack by the radical policies of the environmental left.

Not only have these water projects stabilized water flows and lowered water temperatures, the employment of ample fish hatcheries can provide for unparalleled abundance of salmon and other species. Yet the federal government-refuses to recognize fish-hatchery salmon as part of endangered fish counts and refuses to recognize the contribution that hatcheries can make to thriving fisheries

For many years, the central objective of our water and power policy was to create abundance – to make the desert bloom as the Bureau of Reclamation's Founders put it.

But this original mission seems to have been lost to a radical and retrograde ideology that seeks to create, maintain and ration government-induced shortages. And that is the policy cross-road where we have now arrived.

It is true that with enough government force, fines, lawsuits, edicts, regulations and bureaucracies we can restore plant and animal populations to their original prehistoric conditions by restoring the human population to its original pre-historic conditions.

Or we can return abundance as the central objective of our water and power policy – by providing abundant water, clean and cheap hydroelectricity, new recreational centers, desperately needed flood protection, burgeoning fisheries, re-invigorated farms – not to mention lower electricity, water and flood insurance bills for American families.

It is toward that brighter and more prosperous future that this majority seeks to proceed. It is my hope that the testimony today will assist the House in identifying those changes in law necessary to get there.