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## Chairman Hastings Receives “Water Warrior” Award, Delivers Keynote Speech at Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today received the “Water Warrior” award from the Family Farm Alliance at their annual conference. The Family Farm Alliance is an advocate for family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in seventeen Western states. The award is given to individuals who have provided long-term support for western irrigated agriculture.

Family Farm Alliance President Pat O’Toole, a rancher from Savery, Wyoming, said, “*Chairman Hastings’ agenda matches much of our organization’s agenda. We are grateful for his support of irrigated agriculture in the West.*”

During the keynote address, Chairman Hastings discussed a range of issues the Committee will focus on this Congress including the Endangered Species Act, protecting and promoting hydropower, water storage, and federal regulations that could cost jobs and raise electricity costs.

Below are excerpts from Chairman Hastings’ speech. [Click here](#) to read the full text.

### **Endangered Species Act**

“Many of the issues facing communities and irrigators today are related to the ESA. The Act has become a tool for litigation that has little to do with recovering species but much to do with collecting taxpayer-financed attorneys’ fees. Even Jamie Clark, President Bill Clinton’s Fish and Wildlife Service Director, said that ESA litigation has become an “industry.” Certain environmental groups have exploited unworkable deadlines in the ESA statute to file endless lawsuits. This has led to a so-called “megasettlement” where the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Center for Biological Diversity and Wildearth Guardians met behind closed doors and settled the potential listing of 779 species in 85 lawsuits and legal actions. Not only will this settlement lead to even more attorneys’ fees being paid to the litigants, but it will force the federal agency to rush potential listings that will certainly leaving gaping holes in the science to justify such listings.

Those of you from Texas and four other nearby states are certainly aware of one high profile candidate for listing, the lesser prairie chicken. Another looming potential listing is the greater sage grouse, which could restrict grazing, farming, mining, and other energy

production on tens of millions of acres in the interior West.”

### **Protecting our Dams and Reservoirs**

“I believe we are at a crossroads when it comes to protecting our multi-purpose federal dams and reservoirs. At a time when many are rightly saying that we need to increase our water and power supplies through new projects, we must also remember to protect what has worked for generations. For example, if we increase hydropower by 100 megawatts in one region, but lose 300 megawatts in the same region due to endangered species and other laws, we are still down 200 net megawatts.”

### **Navajo Generating Station**

“Litigation and the threat of litigation are not just relegated to the Endangered Species Act. As many of you know, the EPA is threatening Clean Air Act regulations on the Navajo Generating Station in Page, Arizona. This coal-fired station provides the electricity to pump Colorado River water to cities and tribal and non-tribal irrigated fields in Arizona. It employs 545 workers – 80% of whom are Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe members – and pays workers an average of over 100,000 dollars per year in wages and benefits. Electricity sales also finance previously agreed to Arizona Indian Water Rights settlements.

Despite these benefits, the EPA has proposed to make over half a billion dollar “visibility” improvements that won’t even be visible to the human eye. This would drive up water costs substantially since someone must absorb the costs associated with the improvements. Intermittent wind and solar, which cost more than twice and five times, respectively, than the coal generation are not cost-effective replacements.”

### **Hydropower**

“We can also pursue positive and proactive policies that expand our domestic resources. One of my top priorities is to encourage an ‘all-of-the-above’ approach to American energy production that includes hydropower, nuclear, geothermal, biomass, coal, solar, wind, oil and natural gas. Our nation has just begun to utilize its true and vast energy potential with the revolutionary technologies on oil and natural gas directional drilling and fracking. But, we can do much more to produce enough energy to reduce our dependence on hostile foreign countries, while also creating good-paying energy jobs right here in the U.S.

We can do the same on hydropower. Now, I spoke earlier about how our forefathers had the vision of harnessing the power of water to develop the West. Hydropower accounts for 7% of our national energy production and 70% of Washington State’s energy output, but a lot of low-hanging fruit still exists in this area. You know this firsthand. With the recent technological advances made in low-head hydropower turbines, the West’s vast network of water canals and pipes represent quite an opportunity to replace diesel-powered generators needed to move water or to sell on the electricity marketplace.

At a time of tight federal budgets, home-grown hydropower generated on canals and pipes and sold can provide much-needed revenue and more financial security for a water district. By itself, one hydropower unit may not seem like a lot, but collectively it can add up. For

example, there is enough conduit-based hydropower in Colorado alone to match the output of the 1,400 megawatts produced by the Glen Canyon Dam. You have recognized this by helping my colleague, Scott Tipton, with his legislation to authorize hydropower at Bureau of Reclamation conduits throughout the West and remove unnecessary red-tape associated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).”

### **Surface Water Storage**

“We also need to look at expanding and building new surface water storage. Time and again, water storage has proven its multiple uses, such as hydropower, water for irrigation and municipal needs, recreation, flood control and fish and wildlife needs. Yet, over two-thirds of the Bureau of Reclamation’s dams are 50 years old. We need to ensure that these dams remain useful but we also need to build new ones where financially and environmentally possible.”

### **Education**

“We need to continue building a positive case about why we can provide abundance not at the expense of the environment. But, a lot of education needs to be done, particularly to those outside the West who do not experience these issues in their everyday backyards.

I’ve noticed that you are already building the case for irrigated agriculture through Dr. Darryll Olsen’s economic benefits study of irrigation. At a time when many consumers have little idea where their food, power and water come from, we need to step up together to educate them on why it’s necessary to have federal policies which provide food, water and energy security.”

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