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

Opening Statement by
Congressman Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 795
"Small-Scale Hydropower Enhancement Act of 2011"
June 23, 2011

I would like to thank Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Napolitano for holding this legislative hearing on the Small-Scale Hydropower Enhancement Act of 2011. The Small-Scale Hydropower Act is important legislation that will restore common sense to federal regulations related to water and power supplies and ultimately lead to the expansion of small-scale hydropower generation in Arizona and across the country.

This issue is critical in my state and in particular in Arizona's First Congressional District. There are hundreds of irrigation canals, pipes, and ditches in the state that are prime opportunities for new hydrogenation. I have heard directly from irrigation and drainage districts in my district that the current regulations are a serious impediment to the installation of small turbines on the water delivery systems they manage. In some cases the red tape would double the cost of doing business.

For this reason, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 795. Congressman Smith's bipartisan legislation is an important step in restoring common-sense and rationality to federal policy related to small-scale hydroelectric power generation. It removes bureaucratic barriers that are making it too costly to install small facilities in water systems across rural Arizona by making projects that generate less than one and a half megawatts exempt from FERC jurisdiction.

The fact of the matter is one-size-fits-all federal regulations simply do not make sense. The FERC process is set up for traditional hydroelectric generator impacting large water sources like rivers and streams. It is not suited for irrigation canals, pipes, and ditches. I strongly believe the implementation of this legislation will lead to investment that will cumulatively produce a great deal of electricity, generate revenue and jobs for local irrigation districts in Arizona, and reduce irrigation pumping costs.

In addition, this legislation will authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to include sites with potential low-head hydropower capability in its catalog of available development opportunities. The State of Arizona has a wide variety of canal systems and other water delivery systems that are owned by the federal government and administered by the Bureau of Reclamation. This legislation will ensure the State of Arizona can develop more of its hydroelectric capacity.

Make no mistake, my support of the expansion of small hydropower development is an effort to augment existing hydroelectric capacity, not replace it. I am still extremely concerned by efforts to impede or in some cases across the country, destroy existing large-scale hydroelectric facilities critical to our country's short and long-term clean energy strategy.

In Arizona's First Congressional District, the Glen Canyon Dam's hydropower generation has decreased by almost one third, resulting in an average cost of nearly \$50 million per year, due to misguided environmental regulations that have failed to significantly protect the humpback chub. These types of nonsensical regulations create man-made shortages, which in turn lead to high unemployment and increased water, energy, and food prices and unnecessary taxpayer spending. I appreciate Chairman McClintock's commitment to examining and ultimately push an aggressive legislative agenda in this subcommittee that will halt the endless litigation and regulation that inflates the price of water and power in my state and across the West. I am committed, as a representative of a district that faces the brunt of this problem every day, to restoring sanity to our federal policies related to water.

Hydropower is a clean, renewable, non-emitting source of energy that provides low-cost electricity and helps reduce carbon emissions. It is an integral component of the long-term energy plan for my state and the nation. We must protect our existing hydropower infrastructure and find ways, like H.R. 795, to produce more hydropower from smaller sources. Thank you again, Congressman Smith, for introducing this bipartisan legislation and I look forward to working with you to ensure its passage in the U.S. House of Representatives