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

The Honorable Doc Hastings (R-WA)
Ranking Republican
House Natural Resources Committee
before the
House Subcommittee on Water and Power
Oversight Hearing on

**“American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds for the Bureau of Reclamation and
Water Resources Division of the United States Geological Survey”**
April 28, 2009

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Thank you, Chairwoman Napolitano, for holding this important hearing. I commend my fellow Subcommittee Republicans for asking for this hearing and am glad to join everyone here today.

Water is the lifeblood of Central Washington and throughout the West. The Bureau of Reclamation's multi-purpose projects have formed the economic and social fabric of many of our western communities. The food grown using Reclamation-delivered water has fed millions both here in America and around the world. The Columbia Basin and Yakima Projects in my district are consistent examples of what's worked regionally and for America. And they must continue to be a part of our working river systems. Yet, they and many other irrigation and hydropower projects are under constant assault.

My distinguished colleague from eastern Washington, Cathy McMorris Rodgers, spoke of the debate about the future of the Bureau of Reclamation. Our need for food security and domestic jobs must be included in this debate. And, as we are witnessing in the San Joaquin Valley of California – where employment hovers at 40% because agricultural water has been diverted to a three-inch fish – people's economic needs must be one of the most important parts of the equation.

In those contexts, I – and many others who understand the importance of our traditional water and power infrastructure – had hoped the Bureau of Reclamation would focus much of its funding effort on aging infrastructure. In some ways, the agency did a good job. But, overall, the numbers are much lower than many expected, especially when comparing them to some of the ecosystem restoration and other projects. For example, ecosystem restoration funding has been allocated to help private, non-Reclamation efforts at the Klamath basin and at Battle Creek, California. The agency will also spend \$14 million on a green building in Nevada. Those projects may be worthwhile, but some inevitable questions arise when we have \$3 billion in

aging infrastructure backlogs that are directly related to Reclamation and its customers, we have a crisis situation in the San Joaquin Valley, and, yet, the agency has failed to estimate how many overall jobs would be created by spending one billion dollars of economic stimulus funding.

We had also hoped that the agency would use this as an opportunity to employ some permit streamlining and reduce overhead so that more money could be used for "on-the-ground" purposes. We will hear from the Family Farm Alliance today about this disappointment as well.

With that, I hope to get some answers today. Madam Chairwoman, thank you again for agreeing to hold this hearing and for allowing us to hear from a diverse panel today. I look forward to working with everyone here today on these important matters.