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

**Opening Statement of**  
**Chairman Tom McClintock**

**On Tuesday, October 29, 2013**

**1324 Longworth House Office Building**

**Water and Power Subcommittee Oversight Hearing on**

***“A Roadmap Increasing our Water and Hydropower Supplies: The Need for New and Expanded Multi-Purpose Surface Storage Facilities”***

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The purpose of today's hearing is to identify the current impediments to increasing water storage and hydropower capacity and to look at new concepts on the construction of smaller high-elevation dams.

During the first two thirds of the 20th Century, local, state and federal governments devoted themselves to the development of the vast untapped water resources of the western United States.

Yet, in the 1970's, this positive and forward looking policy was abandoned in favor of increasingly restrictive environmental demands.

We have now lived under these policies for more than four decades, and as a result face increasingly severe water and electricity shortages, spiraling water and electricity prices, devastated farms and a chronically declining economy.

It seems we have lost sight of five self-evident water truths:

First, More water is better than less water. That's about as self-evident as it gets, yet we often hear that instead of producing new storage, we should resign ourselves to chronic water shortages and manage those shortages through increasingly severe conservation measures. But conservation doesn't add more water or give you the multi-purpose benefits that dams give communities

Second, Cheaper water is better than more expensive water. If we agree on this, then it naturally follows that before we employ more expensive sources of water like desalination and recycling, we should first be sure we've exhausted the less expensive long-term and multi-purpose alternatives like surface water storage projects.

Third, Water is unevenly distributed over both time and distance. If we want to have plenty of water in dry periods we have to store it in wet ones, and if we want to have plenty of water in dry regions we have to move it from wet ones. Mother Nature produced

45,000 gallons of fresh water each day for every man, woman and child on the planet. Our problem is not supply – it is distribution. That is why we build dams and aqueducts.

Fourth, we don't need to build dams and aqueducts if our goal is to let our water run into the ocean. Water tends to run downhill very well on its own and doesn't need our help to do so. We build dams and aqueducts to put surplus water to beneficial human use before it runs into the ocean.

Fifth, water is valuable, which allows the market to assign a price to it that can account for its scarcity, availability, storage, transportation, demand and substitution costs, and which in turn tells us which projects are viable and which are wasteful.

If we agree on these five self-evident water truths, then why aren't we proceeding on policies in concert with them?

In the 20th Century, the Bureau of Reclamation built more than 600 dams and reservoirs. Yet today, two-thirds of them are more than 50 years old and with the exception of the Animas-La Plata project in southwestern Colorado, Reclamation has not built a large multi-purpose dam in an entire generation. We will hear that California's water system was built for 22 million people, but is now struggling to serve 38 million people. The last major federal, multi-purpose water project in California was the New Melones Dam in 1979. Yet with water supplies strained to the breaking point, the Left sees no problem committing billions of gallons of precious water for the care and amusement of the Delta Smelt.

The status quo is simply not working and the purpose of today's hearing is to chart a path that leads us to a new era of abundance.

We are fortunate to have Mr. Robert Shibatani before us today. His ground-breaking high-elevation storage concept avoids many of the obstacles to traditional on-stream downstream storage projects.

There is no shortage of water and no shortage of economical storage sites. Financing has never been a problem for projects that produce abundant water and power – experience shows us that such projects pay for themselves many times over. What we suffer is a superabundance of bureaucracy and a catastrophic shortage of vision and political will. That is what has to change.

I am looking forward to hearing from our witnesses today as we chart a course away from past policies of paralysis, shortage, rationing and decline toward a new era of action, abundance and prosperity.