

DOC HASTINGS, WA
CHAIRMAN
DON YOUNG, AK
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TN
LOUIE GOHMERT, TX
ROB BISHOP, UT
DOUG LAMBORN, CO
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VA
PAUL C. BROUN, GA
JOHN FLEMING, LA
MIKE COFFMAN, CO
TOM McCLINTOCK, CA
GLENN THOMPSON, PA
JEFF DENHAM, CA
DAN BENISHEK, MI
DAVID RIVERA, FL
JEFF DUNCAN, SC
SCOTT R. TIPTON, CO
PAUL A. GOSAR, AZ
RAÚL R. LABRADOR, ID
KRISTI L. NOEM, SD
STEVE SOUTHERLAND II, FL
BILL FLORES, TX
ANDY HARRIS, MD
JEFFREY M. LANDRY, LA
CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN, TN
JON RUNYAN, NJ
BILL JOHNSON, OH

TODD YOUNG
CHIEF OF STAFF

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

Opening Statement Outline
Congressman Tom McClintock
Chairman

House Water and Power Subcommittee

At the Legislative Hearing on:

H.R. 461 (Chaffetz); H.R. 795 (Smith), and H.R. 2060 (Walden)

June 23, 2011

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MA
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER
DALE E. KILDEE, MI
PETER A. DEFazio, OR
ENI F.H. FALCOMAVAEGA, AS
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NJ
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, CA
RUSH D. HOLT, NJ
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, AZ
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GU
JIM COSTA, CA
DAN BOREN, OK
GREGORIO KILLI CAMACHO SABLÁN, CNMI
MARTIN HEINRICH, NM
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NM
JOHN P. SARBANES, MD
BETTY SUTTON, OH
NIKI TSONGAS, MA
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PR
JOHN GARAMENDI, CA
COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, HI

JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

Today's hearing takes several steps toward restoring an abundance of water and power – and the additional jobs that abundant water and power make possible. These bills do so simply by removing unreasonable federal restrictions that are impeding job creation.

These bills not only don't cost anything, they will generate additional revenues as jobs are generated as a direct result of lifting these federal restrictions. They seek to empower those at the local level to jump-start rural economies through common-sense reform and regulatory relief.

The bill offered by Congressmen Jason Chaffetz and Rob Bishop of Utah, conveys the federal title of aging electricity distribution lines to a local entity so that it can better manage the system. The "title transfer" concept is a promising one: it places local water projects under local control assuring more sensible and sensitive management, it reduces federal paperwork, and provides instant ownership equity for a local entity to leverage private financing dollars. Twenty seven similar transfers have been passed by Congress since 1995, and the trend toward restoring local projects to local control should be strengthened.

I am concerned from testimony offered by the administration today that it is working overtime to present imagined, bureaucratic obstacles to local control of local water projects that ignore the precedent by which this Committee passed similar legislation in the 109th Congress. The agency needs to cooperate and facilitate local transfers of this nature and not actively impede them.

The bipartisan hydropower production bill offered by our colleagues, Adrian Smith and Jim Costa, explicitly removes pointless bureaucratic impediments. Specifically, H.R. 795 eliminates costly and unnecessary federal regulations that are standing in the way of renewable and emissions-free hydropower generation.

We will hear testimony today of how irrigation districts – which are seeking to develop local hydropower revenue to decrease dependence on federal dollars – have run into a wall of regulations that do nothing to improve the environment while they do irreparable harm to job creation. At least, private sector job creation is a full employment policy for federal regulators.

Those same regulators say that they have improved their permitting program on conduit hydropower, yet the question remains why a federal permit or an exemption for that permit is needed when these projects have no environmental impact in the first place. This legislation will cut through the red tape, get power on-line and put people to work.

Congressman Greg Walden's bill, H.R. 2060, seeks to restore water and power abundance and jobs to a rural area that has been devastated by federal logging restrictions. The bill rightly moves a wild and scenic river boundary one quarter mile to facilitate hydropower development. The bill also provides water to a community so it can help attract more high-tech jobs dependent on reliable water supplies.

I believe the bills before us today are strong evidence that simply by removing pointless bureaucratic regulations in small corners of the country, thousands of new jobs can be created. The fact that these bills are even necessary speaks volumes of what the bureaucratic state has done to stifle prosperity and job creation.

I hope the sub-committee will support these bills and invite my Democratic colleagues to support restoring abundance and prosperity as the principal objects of our federal water and power policy.