

Committee on Resources

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**Ken Calvert's Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Water and Power
Committee on Resources
September 9, 2004**

Today's hearing represents another opportunity to focus on developing new water resources and protecting our current water supplies.

Communities stricken by drought, impaired waters and water shortages caused by environmental regulations and other factors need more tools to provide adequate and reliable water to their citizens. Over this Congress, this Subcommittee has worked hard to provide relief to our western communities through traditional storage, water recycling, desalination, improved conveyance and Endangered Species Act oversight, among others. Today's hearing is another step in that direction.

As we all know, the Federal government cannot solve all of our water problems, but we can play a significant role. Most everyone agrees that Congress can and should provide help to communities trying to "drought-proof" themselves. The question for today is over how the federal government gets the best "bang for the buck" as it relates to desalination. In a world of very limited financial resources, we must decide how capital construction, research and development and energy assistance payments will work by themselves or together to achieve water supply goals.

Today's hearing on the Desalination Energy Assistance Act is an excellent way to begin this discussion and one that we will certainly continue in the next Congress. I look forward to working with Mr. Davis and others with desalination bills and positions to craft a comprehensive effort that provides an array of coordinated solutions to our water supply problems.

We will find some answers today, but we also need input from the Department of Energy, which would implement Mr. Davis's bill. After this hearing, I would like to work with my distinguished ranking Democrat, Grace Napolitano, on a letter that solicits the Department of Energy's view on this bill as well as what the Department is doing in general to promote desalination.

I also want to commend Mr. Reyes and Mr. Rehberg for introducing bills to help their communities with their water supply issues. These two common-sense measures are the right response at the right time. In closing, I want to thank my distinguished colleague, Grace Napolitano, for joining me as an original cosponsor of my bill reauthorizing the vitally important Safety of Dams program. This bill provides the tools to the Bureau of Reclamation to preserve our aging infrastructure while giving local beneficiaries significant input into the process.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses.