

Congressman Ken Calvert

Chairman

Subcommittee on Water and Power

Hearing Testimony by Conner Everts: *Southern California Water Security- Opportunities and Challenges*

**Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony today, here in Southern California. My name is Conner Everts, I represent the Southern California Watershed Alliance. I am also the Convenor, or chair, of the California Urban Water Conservation Council, a state wide organization made up of Water Utilities, Environmental Organizations, and vendors-committed to promoting implementation of the Best Management Practices of urban water conservation.

Southern California has a large and growing population, a semi-arid climate, and a history of finding a majority of its water supply elsewhere, and an aerospace manufacturing base that which left many of our groundwater basins polluted. These are some of the factors that provide a challenge to current and future water supply, quality, and reliability.

However, despite these factors, this region has managed, even through a recent long-term drought, to maintain level water demand even with increases of population. We have seen a view of the future, that can apply to the entire country, by investment with water conservation, water reclamation, and watershed management. These choices have provided a cost-effective alternative to the up and down reliability of just looking at supply options.

The value of these demand-side programs are even more apparent with the current energy pricing crisis and climate change-that has given us in southern California greater rainfall in the last year than areas from where we receive our water.

I am proud to be on this panel with many of the general managers of programs that making southern California drought proof and are investing in the long-term future of this region. In passage of Propositions 12 and 13 and state funding for CALFED we have begun to respond to the voters who have adopted this region's conservation ethic. As the CALFED record of decision reflected the value of conservation, reclamation and watershed management as the first phase of implementation. There are costs involved in these programs, but the paybacks are quick and effective. The comment has been made that conservation is not enough, yet improvements in technologies and involvement by local community groups, including churches and schools have shown how can be done and how much is left to do.

My recommendation to this subcommittee is: to support the thrust of these two popular initiatives-the bonds and CALFED-and focus your legislation on financial assistance for agriculture and urban water use efficiency-conservation and reclamation; water quality, including local salinity control; and watershed management-including harnessing local storm water as a future water supply. There will be strong consensus from through out the state and among all stakeholders for these projects.

We have two options for the future of this state, to rely on the failures of the past or to reinvest in the proven, cost-effective, productive solutions southern Californians shown can work for the rest of the country.

Thank you,

Conner Everts

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