

**STATEMENT OF DON A. CHRISTIANSEN
GENERAL MANAGER
CENTRAL UTAH WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
ON
H.R. 4129
HOUSE RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER
APRIL 24, 2002**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on a bill to amend the Central Utah Project Completion Act, (CUPCA) which originally passed Congress as part of the Reclamation Projects Authorization And Adjustment Act of 1992, (P.L. 102-575). During the ten years since CUPCA became law, the Central Utah Water Conservancy District has exercised the unique opportunity to step into the shoes of the Bureau of Reclamation and complete the planning, design and construction of the Central Utah Project (CUP).

This one-of-a-kind experiment has forced the State of Utah and the water users within the ten counties served by the District to examine very closely exactly what type of project we needed. After all, under the reforms of CUPCA, the Utah taxpayers are paying 35% of the construction costs to complete the project. We have learned much. We have tried to be creative and innovative in how we planned the features to complete the transbasin diversion of Utah's share of Colorado River water to the populous Wasatch front. While we have made progress, we are not yet complete. Simply put, the bill you have before you provides some fine tuning to the original CUPCA authorization to reflect the contemporaneous changes to CUP reflecting the current needs of Utah's water users.

Chairman Hansen once told me that the Central Utah Project is the closest thing to eternal life on earth. Well, we hope Mr. Chairman, the amendments we are proposing will enable us to complete a project which not only creates more supply, but one which also places greater emphasis on water conservation, wastewater reuse, conjunctive use of surface water supplies with groundwater resources and improved water quality through desalination and reverse osmosis technologies.

H.R. 4129 amends CUPCA to provide flexibility allowing for the transfer of unused spending authority between CUPCA programs. CUPCA originally authorized the expenditure of over \$900 million to complete the Central Utah Project (CUP). This authorization was broken down into numerous feature or program specific authorizations. These features or program specific authorization levels were based upon original estimates from the Bureau of Reclamation, some of which were first made in the draft 1964 Definite Plan Report. I am sure it will come as no surprise that the project we are building has changed substantially from the one planned by Reclamation in 1964. In fact, CUPCA itself de-authorized a list of certain project features; however, the Act did nothing to dispose of Reclamation's investigation costs for those de-authorized projects. H.R. will clean up the books, so-to-speak, by making them non-reimbursable.

Since 1992, the District has reformulated the CUP in a number of significant ways. Several project features including the irrigation and drainage system have been eliminated and other programs have been redesigned to be more cost effective. In addition, CUPCA's water conservation program has met with great acceptance and is expected to fully utilize its program specific authorization. The District's program to purchase water rights to meet minimum stream flow needs is also in need of additional funding. Further, certain water delivery features such as the Diamond Fork System have been redesigned to eliminate the

controversial Monks Hollow dam. Because of underground tunnel construction problems, this redesign has increased the overall cost of the Diamond Fork System beyond the authorization limit contained in CUPCA.

H.R. 4129 amends the authority given to the Secretary of the Interior in Section 202 (c) of CUPCA to redirect unexpended budget authority for water conservation projects, water rights acquisition, and other specifically authorized project features in title II of CUPCA. I want to emphasize that **H.R. 4129 does not increase the total authorization for the Central Utah Project.**

H.R. 4129 also eliminates geographic and type-of-use limitations in CUPCA which restrict the District's planning of project features to the delivery of water to only Utah and Juab Counties. I want to emphasize that notwithstanding this change in the law, the District still intends to work with the water users from those two counties to develop a project which will deliver to them the benefits of an enhanced water supply.

As I indicated previously, CUPCA also transferred construction responsibility for CUP from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the state sponsoring agency for the project. Oversight of the District's planning and construction activities is provided by the Department of the Interior.

The legislation would clarify the responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior with respect to the Central Utah Project. This language would ensure that the highly effective administrative arrangement now in place would be allowed to continue. In addition, because from time to time the District has, over the past ten years, asked for assistance from the Bureau of Reclamation, the legislation would authorize a pilot program to be developed between Reclamation and the District to enable increased opportunity for Reclamation to assist the District and the Assistant Secretary in carrying out completion of the project.

Finally, H.R. 4129 would provide for prepayment of repayment contracts for municipal and industrial water delivery facilities, and eliminate a 2002 deadline for such prepayment. This small change would allow the water districts to pay off their contracts more quickly. Thank you.