

# Committee on Resources

## Subcommittee on Forests & Forest Health

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### Witness Testimony

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STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE  
JOHN T. DOOLITTLE  
On H.R. 359  
THE EMIGRANT WILDERNESS PROTECTION ACT OF 1999

Hearing before  
House Subcommittee on Forest and Forest Health  
Of  
The Committee on Resources

February 23, 1999

Madam Chairman, I wish to thank you for holding this hearing on an important piece of legislation, H.R. 359, the Emigrant Wilderness Protection Act of 1999. As you know, this legislation was designed to provide for the maintenance of 18 small dams and weirs within the Emigrant Wilderness. Similar legislation last Congress, H.R. 1663, received overwhelming support when it was brought before this Subcommittee and the full Resources Committee prior to it passing on the House Floor by a vote of 424-2.

The Emigrant Wilderness' 18 check dam system was built between 1921-1954 through the combined efforts of the U.S. Forest Service, the California Conservation Corps, and local volunteer groups. The system works to enhance the high elevation lake fisheries and species habitat by keeping year-round flows in the streams.

H.R. 359 will allow a non-federal entity to pay the costs of maintaining and repairing these substantially unnoticeable structures by allowing the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into a cooperative agreement providing a non-federal entity the opportunity to conduct the necessary maintenance.

By providing for the continued maintenance of all 18 dams, we will protect the stream flow system within the Emigrant Wilderness that for over 70 years has maintained an ecosystem of lakes, streams, and meadows of which many species, including the great American Bald Eagle, depend upon. If these small, unnoticeable dams are allowed to deteriorate, many of the lakes and streams will dry up during the summer and fall months, resulting in negative impacts on the ecosystem, fisheries, and the area's tourism economy.

Madam Chairman, thank you again for holding this hearing. It is my hope that we can move this bill forward with the same resounding support it had last Congress.

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