

Statement of Jack Garner  
Acting Deputy Commissioner and Deputy Director of Operations  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Before the  
House Resources Committee  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
On H.R. 122  
Eastern Municipal Water District Recycled Water System Pressurization and Expansion Project

October 6, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I am Jack Garner, Acting Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to be here today to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 122, the Eastern Municipal Water District Recycled Water System Pressurization and Expansion Project Act. The Administration cannot support this bill.

H.R. 122 would amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (43 U.S.C. 390h *et seq.*), to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the design, planning, and construction of improvements to the Eastern Municipal Water District's reclaimed water distribution system in Riverside County, California. It provides for Federal funding of 25 percent of the total project cost or \$12 million, whichever is less.

Eastern's five water reclamation plants typically produce about 40,000 acre-feet per year with an existing capacity of 55,000 acre-feet per year. The reclaimed water is distributed by a gravity flow system primarily serving agricultural users. This project would create a pressurized distribution system suitable for municipal users, including at least four reservoir tanks of about 4 million gallons capacity each, with associated pipelines and pumping stations. The distribution system may also be expanded eastward to serve existing citrus groves. Project benefits include local drought protection and reduced dependence on imported water.

In 1992, the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act (Public Law 102-575) became law. Title XVI of this Act, the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act, authorized the Secretary to participate in the planning, design and construction of five water reclamation and reuse projects. The Secretary was also authorized to undertake a program to identify other water recycling opportunities throughout the 17 western states, and to conduct appraisal level and feasibility level studies to determine if those opportunities are worthy of implementation. The Bureau of Reclamation has been administering a cost-share program to fund these Title XVI projects since 1994.

In 1996, Public Law 104-266, the Reclamation Recycling and Water Conservation Act, was enacted. This law amended Title XVI of Public Law 102-575 and authorized the Secretary to participate in the planning, design and construction of 18 additional projects, including two desalination research and development projects. Since 1996, Title XVI has been amended several times and other specific pieces of legislation have been enacted such that there now are 29 projects authorized for construction in eight states, not including newly authorized projects in the Hawaii Water Resources Act of 2005.

Mr. Chairman, the Department supports efforts to increase reclaimed water use in southern California and throughout the West. Reclamation is currently working with the District to review the technical work completed to date and to identify the additional work necessary to prepare a complete feasibility report meeting the legal requirements of Title XVI. This effort is being funded entirely by the District.

H.R. 122 would authorize the design and construction of the project before the feasibility study is completed. Reclamation prefers that feasibility studies be completed first to determine whether these particular projects warrant Federal construction authorization.

The Department also believes that this legislation could burden Reclamation's already strained budget. With the tremendous backlog of existing Title XVI projects, we do not support the addition of new projects at this time.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.R. 122. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.