

Committee on Resources

resources.committee@mail.house.gov

[Home](#) [Press Gallery](#) [Subcommittees](#) [Issues](#) [Legislation](#) [Hearing Archives](#)

Statement of Mark Limbaugh

Director, External and Intergovernmental Affairs

U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Reclamation

On

H.R. 1732

before the

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Water and Power

House of Representatives

May 22, 2003

My name is Mark Limbaugh and I am Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1732, concerning the Williamson County water reclamation project in the State of Texas.

H.R. 1732 would amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Public Law 102-575), authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the design, planning, and construction of a water reclamation project in Williamson County, Texas. The authority provided in H.R. 1732 is an amendment to limit the Federal share of project costs to 25 percent of the total project costs, caps the maximum Federal share of each project at \$20 million and restricts the Secretary from providing funding for the operation and maintenance.

Reclamation only recently met with representatives of the Lower Colorado River Authority and thus we have not had sufficient time to review the merits of the project. In that respect, until we have more information, we cannot comment on the merits of the project itself and therefore cannot support H.R. 1732.

The Department also believes enactment of this legislation authorizing new construction projects is likely to place an additional burden on Reclamation's already tight budget. With the tremendous backlog of Title XVI projects that already exist, we do not support the addition of new wastewater projects at this time.

For the Record, Mr. Chairman, in 1992, the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act (Public Law 102-575) was enacted. Title XVI of this Act, the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act, authorized construction of five water reclamation and reuse projects. The Secretary also was authorized to undertake a program to identify other water recycling opportunities throughout the 17 western United States and to conduct appraisal level and feasibility level studies to determine if those opportunities are worthy of implementation. In addition, the Secretary was authorized to conduct research and to construct, operate, and maintain demonstration projects. Reclamation has been administering a grant program to fund these Title XVI activities since FY 1994.

In 1996, Public Law 104-266, the Reclamation Recycling and Water Conservation Act, was enacted. This Act amended Title XVI and authorized the Secretary to participate in the planning, design, and construction of 18 additional projects, including two desalination research and development projects. To date, Congress has provided funding to plan or construct 19 of 25 specifically authorized projects. Under the general authority of Title XVI, funding has been provided to identify and investigate, at the appraisal or feasibility

level, eight potential water recycling projects, and to conduct three research and demonstration projects.

In summary, the Department strongly encourages local water recycling efforts and is engaged in numerous water reuse and recycling projects around the West. However, for the reasons provided above, the Department cannot, at this time, support authorizing this new construction request.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.R. 1732. This concludes my statement and I would be happy to answer any questions.

####