

TESTIMONY OF DAVID C. McCOLLOM  
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BEFORE THE WATER & POWER SUBCOMMITTEE  
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Chairman Radanovich and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this hearing and allowing me to testify in support of H.R. 5715. My name is David McCollom and I am the General Manager of the Olivenhain Municipal Water District. I wish to publicly thank Congressman Brian Bilbray for introducing this important piece of legislation that is crucial for the overall water supply plan in the San Diego area. I would also like to thank Congressman Hunter for co-sponsoring this legislation as a benefit for the entire San Diego Region.

The Olivenhain Municipal Water District is a public agency organized and operating pursuant to California Water Code Sections 71000 *et seq* since 1959. The District provides potable water, wastewater services, recycled water, hydroelectricity and operates a recreational reserve in northern San Diego County. The District service area encompasses over 48 square miles and serves a population of nearly 58,000 residents. It is projected that by the year 2020, the District will serve a population of approximately 90,000 residents. Over the past 10 years, the District has pursued an aggressive recycled water program. In 2002, the District completed the construction of a 34 million gallon per day membrane water treatment plant. This was followed in 2003 by the completion of a 318 foot high roller compacted concrete dam in cooperation with its partner, the San Diego County Water Authority.

H.R. 5715 will amend the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustments Act of 1992 to authorize the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to continue to participate in the construction of the North San Diego County Area Water Recycling Project. This Project is a regional cooperative effort by the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority, the Leucadia County Water District, the City of Carlsbad and the Olivenhain Municipal Water District. Together, these agencies have identified a system of interconnected recycling facilities to serve northern coastal and inland San Diego County. When completed, the project will serve an area of more than 100 square miles, from the coastal communities of Carlsbad, Encinitas and Solana Beach inland to the San Dieguito River Valley, and will ultimately add up to 5 billion gallons annually to the San Diego region's local water supply.

The first phase of the project (The San Elijo Project), which is complete, is already producing 500 million gallons of recycled water annually. This water is delivered to over 90 user sites in the cities of Encinitas, Solana Beach and Del Mar. The second phase (the Olivenhain Southeast Project) is producing more than 125 million gallons annually. By 2007, it will increase to 350 million gallons per year that will serve the area's rural and urbanized customers. The third phase (City of Carlsbad) is operational and delivering 700 million gallons per year and will deliver up to 1.5 billion gallons per year by the end of 2007. To date, local agencies have spent over \$100 million on these projects while the Bureau of Reclamation has contributed over \$17 million. These capital expenditures have represented a heavy financial burden to our agencies and without Federal participation these innovative water supply projects, that have become vital to the region, would not be a reality.

In addition to the benefits to the San Diego County region, numerous federal objectives are advanced through the ultimate development of the North San Diego Area County Water Recycling Project. The project will directly reduce the surrounding region's demand for imported water from the environmentally sensitive California Bay/Delta and will help California live within its 4.4 million acre-feet allocation of water from the Colorado River. The project will also reduce the amount of effluent discharged into coastal waters and advance U.S./Mexico border environmental initiatives.

H.R. 5715 will increase the overall authorization ceiling for the North San Diego Area Water Recycling Project from \$20 million to \$35 million to complete the regional project and include, as a new component, Phase II of the Olivenhain Water Treatment Plant. This new component will treat and deliver impaired surface water from nearby Lake Hodges that is not currently available for consumptive use. Lake Hodges was added to the list of impaired water bodies by the California State Water Resources Control Board in 2003 according to EPA Clean Water Act §303 (d). Once complete, Phase II of the Olivenhain Water Treatment Plant will be able to treat the additional 13,000 acre feet of Lake Hodges water, a new local water supply to the region.

Mr. Chairman, while I understand and appreciate the strict budgetary limitations that your Committee and Congress as a whole is faced with, the North San Diego County Area Water Recycling Project has proven to be a worthwhile federal investment. Unlike some projects that receive federal funds, this project is actually developing new, reliable water supplies that the San Diego region has come to depend on. It is essential that we complete this project.

This concludes my testimony. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.