

Committee on Resources, Full Committee

- - Rep. James V. Hansen, Chairman

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515-6201 - - (202) 225-2761

Witness Statement

Representative Richard W. Pombo
House Committee on Resources
*Regarding Review of Water Management and
Endangered Species Issues in the Klamath Basin*
Klamath County Fairgrounds, 3531 South 6th Street
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603
June 16, 2001, 9:00 am

Good morning. Welcome, everyone. The hearing of the House Committee on Resources will please come to order.

Today, the committee will exercise its oversight jurisdiction with regard to the water management and endangered species issues in the Klamath Basin.

I would like to thank everyone here for coming to this important event. I would like to also thank Representative Greg Walden, whose congressional district we are in this morning, as well as my other colleagues present here today. I am grateful for their interest in this important matter.

Let me begin by introducing myself. I am Richard Pombo. I represent the 11th Congressional District of California, which is home to the San Joaquin and Sacramento counties.

I do not want to speak too long because we are here to listen to you. My purpose today is to focus attention on the Klamath Basin problem, find solutions and to assist in any way that we can.

Let me say this, though, after serving as Chairman of the House Resources Committee Endangered Species Act (ESA) working group, I have attended numerous hearings throughout the years around the country, and heard testimony from people who have lost their homes, their jobs and their dignity due to questionable interpretations of the Act.

It is clear to me that ESA has been misused for years by some advocacy groups to threaten the rights of private property owners. Further, the impacts from environmental lawsuits on businesses and families throughout California and across the nation have been financially and emotionally devastating. We have sacrificed enough.

I simply cannot stand by quietly as farmers, ranchers, families, and businesses, especially those in the West who depend on natural resources for a living, suffer for no constructive purpose.

It is time to take back our economic and constitutional rights. After all, the human species deserves the most important place in the ESA equation.

I look forward to hearing from the panels of witnesses today, and to explore ways to improve the water management and endangered species issues in the Klamath Basin and across the nation.

Again, I want to again thank everyone for being here.

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