

Statement of William E. Rinne
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Before the
House Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Water and Power
On H.R. 1190,
San Diego Water Storage and Efficiency Project

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am William Rinne, Deputy Commissioner and Director of Operations for the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to be here today to present the Department's views regarding H.R. 1190, the San Diego Water Storage and Efficiency Act of 2005.

H.R. 1190 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to initially undertake an appraisal investigation of a four reservoir intertie system in San Diego County, California. In cooperation and consultation with the City of San Diego and the Sweetwater Authority, the appraisal investigation would determine whether a system of pumps and pipelines that would interconnect four non-Federal reservoirs (San Vicente Reservoir, El Capitan Reservoir, Loveland Reservoir, and Lake Murray) would improve water storage capabilities, water reliability, and local water yield. The appraisal report would then determine the prudence of a feasibility study for the proposed intertie system. If the appraisal investigation recommends that the proposed intertie system be studied further, the proposed bill would authorize the Secretary to undertake a study to determine the feasibility of the intertie system. As part of the feasibility authorization, the Federal cost share will not exceed 50 percent of the total study costs.

The Department is aware of local efforts to study ways to increase local water supplies and reliability in southern California. However, we are hesitant to insert the Federal Government into the control or decision making of a purely local water supply project with no relationship to Reclamation facilities. Efforts to consider ways to improve the efficient use of their reservoirs, increase the region's water supply reliability, increase water storage capability, and improve the ability of the area to more efficiently and effectively use their imported water are realistic goals for local facilities, but the rationale for a federal presence in this matter is unclear.

The Bureau of Reclamation is currently working with the City of San Diego and the Sweetwater Authority on other unrelated water recycling projects that help with the future needs for water of the region. However, while the Department and Reclamation support efforts to better manage and utilize limited water supplies, we cannot support this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.R. 1190. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.