

Statement of William E. Rinne
Deputy Commissioner of Reclamation
U.S. Department of the Interior

Before the Subcommittee on Water and Power
Committee on Resources
U.S. House of Representatives

On

S. 101, To Convey to the Town of Frannie, Wyoming, Certain Land Withdrawn by
The Commissioner of Reclamation

December 7, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am William Rinne, Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to appear before this Subcommittee to give the Administration's view which supports S. 101, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land to the town of Frannie, Wyoming. This land was originally withdrawn from the public domain on April 19, 1920, for reclamation purposes and is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Reclamation has concluded that it does not have any continuing project need for the land or any vested interest in or ownership of any appurtenances on the land.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) conducted a survey of the land and determined that the land is no longer suitable for return to the public domain and management under the public land and mining laws. Additionally, the BLM recommended a means of disposal of the parcel be sought whereby Frannie could protect its investment.

The Town of Frannie has title to the S½ of Block 26, the adjacent parcel, which is where the town hall is located. In addition, pursuant to a Special Use Permit issued by the Bureau of Reclamation in 1990, the town uses the NE¼ of Block 26 for the Wyoming Centennial Garden. The Deaver Irrigation District (Deaver) managed this land for Reclamation. Previously, Deaver authorized the relocation of a building on the NW¼ of Block 26, which was subsequently conveyed to Frannie and is now being used as a town meeting hall.

S. 101 would direct the Secretary to convey, without consideration, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to that parcel of land to the town of Frannie. The bill would also revoke the Special Use Permit with the town of Frannie for the Centennial Garden City Park and Secretarial Orders issued by the Commissioner of Reclamation which withdrew the land for the Shoshone Project in 1913 and the Frannie town site Reservation in 1920.

It is customary for the Department to seek fair market value for land proposed for transfer. However, in this case, given that the parcel is less than one acre, its value is minimal as compared to the costs associated with the process of selling it, and the town currently uses the land for the benefit of the public, the Department supports S.101.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. That concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions.