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Water and Power Subcommittee
Oversight Hearing on
“Bureau of Reclamation Small Conduit Hydropower Development
and Rural Jobs Act of 2011”, H.R. 2842
September 14, 2011

Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Napolitano, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to present testimony in support of H.R. 2842. In addition to representing our own district I am speaking today on behalf of the advisory committee of the Family Farm Alliance. From 1995 to 2008 I served as the General Manager of the Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation & Drainage District, (MSIDD) and since then have been serving as their Water and Power consultant. MSIDD includes 87,000 acres of irrigated farmland, located in western Pinal County of Arizona. It was formed primarily to take Colorado River water from the Central Arizona Project (CAP) system, when it became available, by connecting with the CAP's Tucson aqueduct and delivering the water through more than 250 miles of concrete-lined canals, laterals, pipelines, pumping plants and related works. The system is also used to deliver groundwater operated with pumps powered by electricity from Hoover Dam, Glen Canyon Dam, and Parker-Davis Dam as well as supplemental purchased power, all provided by its sister district, Electrical District No. 3, Pinal County.

On May 4th of this year I had the opportunity to come before you to give testimony on low head hydro possibilities on Bureau systems in the West. At that time we noted that we had spent two years trying to get answers to the very points made in this bill, sometimes one area would determine one answer based on old history, only to have someone look at the answer and state that it would not be amenable to their region. We asked questions 1) about ownership, including who owned the right to the unit to be built, 2) about lease of power privilege, 3) about the need for an environmental assessment, especially when one has been done in the past twenty years and the construction of a unit would be within the existing boundaries and even in the conduit itself, and 4) about the need for a FERC permit (especially when FERC already exempts the size of most of these units once one applies for the permit). We lastly 5) raised the issue of one central office that all answers would go through for clearance. This bill before you today answers those questions, enough so that we, on the ditch bank, can have

information to rely on so that we can go forward with planning of projects, including costs, and time to construct such units, as well as some idea as to the time and costs required to meet Bureau requirements.

As I noted in my earlier testimony our district has a potential of building 14 to 17 units (we won't know for sure until some of the questions which will be answered in this bill will come to light). Of those 17 units we can generate a total of approximately 2200kws, which could provide enough electricity to power 550 to 1000 homes, or about 6 to 7 of our deep well pumps, primarily used for irrigation. Also, having low head hydro available to our districts gives us options in efficient and economic operations: when, in the middle of the 110 degree summers in central Arizona, we can use the systems to reduce the requirement from the electrical district so they can avoid overloads or brownouts on their lines, and we can also generate some income from the sale of the power to offset operational costs to the district.

As a final note, please understand that from our discussions with a number of the Bureau of Reclamation personnel, including Deputy Commissioner Murrillo and up to the Commissioner, Mike Connor, there has been an interest in getting something started in Low Head Hydro Systems, but there has been difficulty and confusion in determining where to start , and recognizing that all districts are not created as "one size fits all". This bill is a major step towards that end.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and testify on the importance of H.R. 2842.