

Committee on Resources

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Michael Whitehead Testimony

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Committee members and staff. My name is Michael Whitehead and I am a member of the Board of Directors of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority. Let me express my appreciation to Congresswoman Grace Napolitano for introducing HR1284 and Congressman David Dreier and Congresswoman Hilda Solis for co-sponsoring the legislation.

The Title XVI program has provided the San Gabriel Basin with the ability to provide much needed wellhead treatment, stem the flow of contaminants, stabilize water rates and most importantly deliver safe and reliable drinking water to the residents of the San Gabriel Basin.

By increasing the authorization for the San Gabriel Basin Demonstration Project, HR1284 will allow us to continue the incredible progress that has been made over the last few years in cleaning up and utilizing the groundwater in the San Gabriel Basin. Title XVI has allowed us to maximize local dollars as we attempt to remediate groundwater contamination that threatens the drinking water supply of over 1 million residents of the San Gabriel Basin.

In the time period since the Title XVI program was made available to the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority, 10 projects have been allocated funding. Seven projects have been built and another three will begin construction in the near future.

Without the funding for the treatment facilities local water producers would have been forced to shut down water wells due to migrating contamination. The closures would have forced local water purveyors to become reliant on Colorado River water at a time that the state's allotment is being cutback. This would have severely impaired our ability to provide water for users in the basin and forced us to rely on imported water.

It is vital that we restore the basin's aquifer. Once we are able to remediate the contamination it is our belief that the Valley will be able to use the aquifer to meet all of the basin's water needs. Removing harmful contaminants from our communities groundwater supply will allow local water producers to better meet the needs of local residents at affordable rates. Lifting the ceiling on Title XVI makes certain that the basin is able to meet the water supply needs of future generations.

We urge the Committee and their fellow members of Congress to lift the ceiling on the Title XVI program to allow us to carry out our mission of facilitating groundwater cleanup and providing a clean, reliable drinking water supply for the 1 million residents of the San Gabriel Basin.

Thank you for allowing me to testify for the Subcommittee today.

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