

Today's legislative agenda focuses on two issues that the Water and Power Subcommittee sees as priorities: Title XVI Water Recycling and Tribal Water Rights Settlement Legislation. Today we are also considering H.R. 2950, a bill that allows for early repayment of contracts for the Uintah Water Conservancy.

Welcome to Commissioner Connor to what I anticipate will be the first of many subcommittee hearings. We look forward to hearing the Bureau of Reclamation's perspective on Title XVI and Indian water rights. I am concerned about the Administration's position to not support the Title XVI legislations and H.R. 1065- the White Mountain Apache Settlement legislation and I hope you will be able to enlighten this Subcommittee this morning on the reasons why the Department of the Interior does not support programs to better manage our western water resources. We want to better understand the constraints the Bureau has in supporting these programs and what needs to be done to resolve your concerns. Our desire is to have the Administration support these bills. If it is an issue of basic funding let us know. If it is an issue of unclear Administrative or legislative direction, tell us how we can help provide the focus. Let me make this very clear, we look upon the Title XVI and Indian Water Settlement programs as being critical to addressing the water crisis of the West.

Today we will hear testimony on five separate Title XVI program authorizations. When combined, these five bills produce 62,000 acre-feet of recycled, reuse water to the system, At a time when my home state of California faces tough economic and hydrologic conditions, from the Bay-Delta region to the Southland, we cannot ignore the role nor the importance of the Title XVI program in helping solve our water problems.

I personally welcome Chairman Lupe of the White Mountain Apache Tribe for the testimony we will receive on H.R. 1065. This legislation settles the claims of the Tribe and provides the White Mountain Apache tribe with a quantified water right. Most importantly it provides certainty to all water users in the Salt River Basin and a defined water right from which the Tribe can work to improve their economic well being.

Thank you to all the witnesses for traveling many miles to meet with us here in Washington, DC.

I now want to welcome my colleague and new Ranking Member, Mr. Tom McClintock, to the subcommittee, and ask for any opening statement he may have.