

**Statement of Robert Quint, Acting Deputy Commissioner  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Before the  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Water and Power**

**H.R. 236  
May 17, 2007**

Madam Chairwoman and members of the subcommittee, I am Bob Quint, Acting Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to provide the Department of Interior's views on HR 236, the North Bay Water Reuse Program Act of 2007. The Department does not support HR 236.

HR 236 would authorize the planning, design, and construction of water reclamation and reuse projects in the North Bay Water Reuse Program. HR 236 would require the project be constructed in two phases, the first phase being the main treatment and main conveyance system, and the second phase being the sub-regional distribution system.

The Administration does not support construction authorizations when a Feasibility Report has not been completed for a given project. From Fiscal Year 2003 through 2006, Congress appropriated a total of \$1.25 million for feasibility investigations to the Sonoma County Water Agency to determine if the project has engineering and economic feasibility. The Agency also studied whether the project proponents have financial capability, and evaluated the environmental effects of the project, in accordance with the Bureau of Reclamation's guidelines for Title XVI.

In December 2006, the Sonoma County Water Agency submitted a draft report that covered a portion of the information required for a feasibility determination. In April 2007, Reclamation provided comments on the report and also reminded the Sonoma County Water Agency that the environmental and economic information still needs to be submitted in order for Reclamation to complete the feasibility determination.

Apart from this consideration, HR 236 contains unclear authorization language. As introduced, the legislation does not cite the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Public Law 102-575, Title XVI), as the authority for the planning, design, and construction of the project. Therefore, it is unclear if the intent of HR 236 is to authorize the North Bay Water Reuse Program as a Title XVI project. If it is not the intent, then the feasibility study referenced above would need to meet the requirements of the of the *Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies*, also known as the Federal P&Gs for water resource development. Either way, it is premature to authorize the North Bay Water Reuse Program for construction before a feasibility study has been approved. Moreover, of the 32 specific Title XVI projects authorized to date, 21 have received funding. The remaining estimated total authorized Federal cost share of these 21 active Title XVI projects is at least \$328 million. Given the costs of the currently active Title XVI projects, we do not support the authorization of new projects at this time.

While Reclamation does not support new authorizations for Federal cost sharing of water recycling projects, we understand that the projects established by Title XVI are important to many water users in the West. To that end, Reclamation has set about revising and improving its Directives and Standards that govern reviews of Title XVI projects. By doing so, we believe that Reclamation can play a more constructive role with local sponsors in weighing the merits and ultimate feasibility of proposed water recycling projects.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions.