

**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. 1725
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 be here today to give the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1725, the Rancho California Water District Recycled Water Treatment and Reclamation Facility Act. The Department does not support H.R. 1725.

H.R. 1725 would amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (43 U.S.C. 390h *et seq.*), to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the design, planning, and construction of the Rancho California Water District's facilities for water recycling, demineralization, desalination, and distribution of non-potable water supplies in Riverside County, California.

The Rancho California Water District is located in southwestern Riverside County, which has been experiencing explosive growth. The District is heavily dependent on imported water provided by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. In order to lessen this dependence the District has developed a Regional Integrated Resources Plan that includes three components. Together, the component projects will expand local water resources by increasing conjunctive use by about 13,000 acre-feet per year, expanding the use of recycled water by about 16,000 acre-feet per year, and substituting untreated water for the treated water that is currently being used for agricultural irrigation. Implementation of the Regional Integrated Resources Plan would require the construction of pipelines, pumping plants, an advanced water treatment facility, and brine disposal facilities. The total estimated cost is about \$103 million.

The Department supports efforts to increase local water supplies and increase recycled water use in southern California. Reclamation is currently working with the District to review the technical work completed to date and to identify the additional work necessary to prepare a complete feasibility report meeting the feasibility requirements of Title XVI projects. However, because the technical studies are not complete, the feasibility and cost effectiveness of this project cannot be determined. Title XVI provisions require that these technical studies be completed and reviewed to determine the feasibility and cost effectiveness.

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. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.R. 1725. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.