



# **Chairman Mike Simpson**

---

*Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and  
Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations*

**Hearing on the Bureau of Reclamation  
FY 2017 Budget Request  
February 11, 2016  
Opening Statement As Prepared**

---

I'd like to call this hearing to order. Good morning, everyone. Our hearing today is on the fiscal year 2017 budget request for the Bureau of Reclamation.

Our witness is the Commissioner of Reclamation, Mr. Estevan López. Mr. Commissioner, welcome back to the Subcommittee. Last time you were here, you had been on the job for only about two months. I'm happy to see you haven't been scared off yet. I look forward to talking with you about Reclamation's accomplishments over the past year as well as the challenges facing the Bureau of Reclamation. Joining the Commissioner at the witness table is Mr. Robert Wolf, Director of the Program and Budget Office. We're happy to have you join us again as well, Mr. Wolf.

Historically, the Bureau of Reclamation was instrumental in development of the western United States. The electric power and movement and management of water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural uses provided by Reclamation projects allowed citizens to settle new areas, provided industrial support for World War II, and supported broad economic growth.

Today, the water and power benefits of Reclamation projects are no less important to the economic health of the region and of the nation as a whole. But the challenges facing Reclamation have changed. Then, the challenges were of designing and constructing immense infrastructure projects – projects that decades later remain engineering marvels. Now, Reclamation must figure out how to maintain this aging infrastructure – necessary to support a still-growing population – while also addressing new environmental requirements, or new interpretations of old requirements, that have increased the amount of water directed towards restoring fish runs and habitat areas. For the past several years, Reclamation has had to deal with an uncooperative Mother Nature, as well.

And just in case anyone thought that task was too easy, Reclamation must attempt to meet these goals with a budget that has not seen significant increases in many years. Taken together, these circumstances mean it is even more important that we – executive branch and legislative branch together – resist the pull to overpromise results and that we ensure that the funding provided is directed to the activities that will bring the greatest benefits to the nation. I look forward to

discussing with the Commissioner how the federal government might address these many concerns.

Again, I'd like to welcome him to the subcommittee. Commissioner López, please ensure that the hearing record, questions for the record, and any supporting information requested by the Subcommittee are delivered in final form to us no later than four weeks from the time you receive them. Members who have additional questions for the record will have until close of business Monday to provide them to the Subcommittee office.

#####