

Statement by the Honorable Paul Gosar
Vice-Chairman, House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee
Legislative Hearing on
H.R. 1107 (Gosar), H.R. 1407 (Lujan), H.R. 2273 (Lummis), H.R. 2749 (Valadao)
June 25, 2015

Today, our Subcommittee will hear testimony on a number of bills designed to help the Bureau of Reclamation in its mission of developing and managing our water resources in the West.

For over a century, this federal agency has transformed the West into a powerhouse that feeds the nation and the world and provides renewable, emissions-free energy for millions. The Central Arizona Project and other projects in my home state are testaments to what mankind can do to harness the Colorado River basin waters that once ravaged landscapes for a few months then disappeared for the remainder of the year. Although we have our drought challenges from time to time, we now have water year-round because of these visionary projects.

These projects must be protected for our future generations. That's why I – and Senator Barasso of Wyoming -- introduced "*The Bureau of Reclamation Transparency Act*," a bipartisan bill to require the federal government to make public the estimated cost of repairs for Reclamation facilities. For years, Congress and many water users asked for such information, only to be rebuffed time and again. Once these bills were introduced, the agency started to become more transparent and it's now about to implement what the legislation proposes. While I commend the agency for responding to our bills, it's important that our bills put transparency in statute and to resolve any ongoing concerns with implementation.

The ultimate point of this bipartisan bill is to have the necessary information for Congress, states and localities and water and power users to make informed decisions on aging infrastructure, much of which is 50 years or older. I welcome a true expert in the water field, Mr. Tom Davis, General Manager of the Yuma County Water Agency, who is testifying before us today on this bill. Mr. Davis is also representing ___ today. His commitment to making water flow in the Yuma area, one of the driest in the United States, and his expertise in working with the Bureau of Reclamation speak volumes.

The American public have asked for and deserve laws that reflect the needs of this century. Letting the sunlight in on government is just one of those needs. Incentivizing non-federal partners in tough budget times is another and that's what some of the other bills before us do today. Pending further study, the State of Wyoming will be empowered to capture more of its Colorado River allotment in Ms. Lummis' bill. Although Wyoming is always welcome to send more water downstream to the lower basin, I commend my colleague for her leadership. I also appreciate Mr. Valadao's effort to build more water storage through his update of a Jimmy Carter-era dam safety law.

I also commend Mr. Lujan for his bill to help the New Mexico portion of the Navajo Nation and welcome their spokesman to today's panel. I welcome the rest of our witnesses and yield back the remainder of our time