

Statement of Congressman Duncan Hunter before the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans

I want to thank Chairman Fleming for scheduling this hearing on a matter that is very important to my constituents and the region I represent. I also appreciate Chairman Bishop's efforts to move this agreement forward, and it's my hope that this legislation will move through this committee, and be considered by the full House in the coming months.

After several decades, H.R. 1296, a bill to amend the San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 1988, stands to bring this very long journey to a successful end.

The Settlement Agreement that the legislation will implement has been approved by: the five Mission Bands whose water rights were at issue; the City of Escondido and the Vista Irrigation District whose water contracts were at issue; and effective January 30, 2015, by Interior Secretary Jewell and Assistant Attorney General Cruden on behalf of the United States.

With the support of all of the parties to litigation that began many decades ago, the 1988 Act's last requirement for a settlement agreement signed by all the parties and approved by the Congress will be fulfilled. The legislation will end decades of litigation and allow the Bands to protect their water rights.

I also want to emphasize to my colleagues that this bill does not require any new spending- all funds have been appropriated, and the provision of supplemental water to the San Luis Rey River Basin can proceed once this bill is passed and signed into law.

So with the passage of this bill, we will be relieving the parties, including the United States, of the burden of litigation they have been carrying for many, many years.

Chairman Fleming, thank you again for the committee's consideration of this legislation, and it is my hope that it will soon reach the House floor for consideration.