

**Statement
of Theodore C. Cooke
General Manager
Central Arizona Water Conservation District**

**Before the
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Hearing on H.R. 2459 Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2019
June 26, 2019**

Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member McClintock and members of the Subcommittee, I am Theodore Cooke, General Manager of the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD). Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the CAWCD on H.R. 2459 “Hualapai Tribe Water Settlements Act of 2019” through this statement for the record. For the reasons I will discuss below, CAWCD supports H.R. 2459.

Role of CAWCD in Arizona

CAWCD manages the Central Arizona Project (CAP), a 336-mile canal system that delivers Colorado River water into central and southern Arizona. CAWCD’s service area includes more than 80 percent of Arizona’s population. The largest supplier of renewable water in Arizona, CAWCD diverts an average of over 1.5 million acre-feet of Arizona’s 2.8 million acre-foot Colorado River entitlement each year through the CAP to municipal and industrial users, agricultural irrigation districts, and Indian communities. Our goal at CAWCD is to provide our customers with an affordable, reliable, and sustainable supply of Colorado River water.

Background

CAWCD, the Hualapai Tribe, the State of Arizona and other Arizona parties have worked for the past several years to reach a settlement that accomplishes the goals of fairness and certainty to all parties. H.R. 2459 represents resolution of Phase 2 of the Hualapai settlement. Phase 1 resolved issues relating to the Bill Williams watershed, and now Phase 2 resolves all remaining claims of the Tribe for water rights within Arizona, including claims to the Colorado River.

The Act will provide the Tribe with 4,000 acre-feet of Central Arizona Project water, and the necessary infrastructure to get that water to the reservation. This water will supply the needs of the Tribal residents of the reservation, as well as the Tribe’s plans for economic development. The Act will not only benefit the Tribe by providing wet water, but will avoid the burden of costly litigation and provide certainty going forward to water users throughout the area.

Conclusion

For the reasons noted, the CAWCD Board of Directors voted unanimously to support the settlement and H.R. 2459. We would like to thank Rep. O'Halleran for his sponsorship of this bill, as well as Rep. Stanton, Rep. Kirkpatrick, Rep. Gallego, Rep. Biggs, Rep. Gosar, Rep. Schweikert, and Rep. Lesko for their co-sponsorship. Thank you for your consideration.