

Ranking Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member McClintock thank you for scheduling this hearing on the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act. It feels great to be back working for the people of Idaho.

Since I have arrived in Congress, many of you on both sides of the aisle have received potato products from my home state. This is an effort I have undertaken called potato diplomacy as I've introduced myself to my colleagues on both side of the aisle.

In Idaho, we are very proud of the potato but also all the diverse crops that we grow. Agriculture makes up roughly 20% of my state's economy and is critical to our prosperity.

As many of you on the Committee also know, to have dependable crops, we must have dependable sources of water. And as a proud Idahoan, my state is always on the forefront of conserving our water as we look to get the most out of every droplet of water as it winds its way through the canals and irrigation ditches of our great water delivery system.

That is why Idaho and our state government is leading the charge on aquifer recharge efforts. In 2015, the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer water users came together to stabilize and rebuild their Aquifer. These water users decided to reduce their groundwater use by 240,000 acre-feet every year. At the same time, the state has invested \$20 million on infrastructure improvements to assist further efforts.

But more can be done to conserve water and rebuild our Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer.

My commonsense bill can optimize these recharge efforts by authorizing the use of federally owned facilities for aquifer recharge purposes while protecting their intended uses. At the same time, the bill authorizes canal rights-of-way across federal land and assists with other federal easements to help make aquifer recharge more efficient across the West.

My bill also maximizes water use by allowing contract holders to use federal project water for aquifer recharge when it makes sense and the bill encourages landowners to optimize recharge efforts by reducing federal red tape.

Finally, I want to thank Trout Unlimited for their engagement on this issue and for working on language modifications to authorize the Secretary to work with State-led advisory groups.

Yesterday, I offered an amendment to the Rules Committee to H.R. 2, the Moving America Forward Act, that reflects these modifications. The amendment also reflects changes made to the Senate version of this bill which was unanimously reported out of Committee.

Due to these changes and overwhelming bipartisan support, I am hopeful the Chairman and the full Committee will support this bill in a future mark up as well as the inclusion of the amendment to H.R. 2 when the bill is brought to the floor.

I yield back.