

Statement for NR WOW Subcom Hrng: The Colorado River Drought Conditions and Response Measures

- I want to thank Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz for holding two days of hearings on the dire drought conditions in the Colorado River Basin. This is such an important topic and one that I have been invested in well before I came to Congress.
- I also want to thank and welcome Metropolitan Water District's new GM, Adel Hagekhalil, for being here, and to the Subcommittee and the Chair for inviting him to testify.
- I can't think of a better witness than Metropolitan to be here today due to their vast history and knowledge with this river system. The Colorado River Aqueduct, built and operated by MWD, provides about 25% of the water used in their service area. For the past two decades, MWD has been committed to increasing the sustainability of the Colorado River by building partnerships inside and outside California based on conservation, storage, and reuse.
- An example of one of these partnerships is the proposed partnership between Metropolitan, the LA County Sanitation District, the Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Water Conservation District, and the Arizona Department of Water Resources, to develop the largest wastewater purification facility in the US, known as the Regional Recycled Water Project. This multi-billion-dollar project would produce 168,000 acre-feet of water annually, enough for more than 500,000 households.
- This innovative recycling project represents an opportunity for three states in the Basin to improve their water supply reliability through a single project. It could transform how water is managed in the Basin and become a model for future interstate partnerships.
- Due to the high price tag of this project, there currently aren't any meaningful existing grant programs in the federal government to adequately support it which is why I introduced H.R. 4099, which would create a new grant program within the Bureau to support large-scale recycling projects with an estimated cost of at least \$500 million.
- With the help of MWD and other local water agencies, Southern California has continued to be a leader in modernizing water infrastructure and working to reduce our reliance on imported water. LA currently recycles more than 100 million gallons of water per day for use in irrigation, industrial purposes, and

groundwater recharge. But as LA continues to grow, climate change becomes more severe, and droughts only getting longer and harsher, now more than ever the federal government should be stepping in to make adequate, long-term financial investments into drought resilience and conservation projects.

- I again want to thank the Chairman and this Subcommittee for holding this hearing. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses and continuing to work with the Bureau, Basin States, Tribes, environmental organizations, water agencies, and all other stakeholders on the Colorado River for a path forward to a more drought resilient West.