

Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano Statement for H.R. 1162, the Water Recycling Investment and Improvement Act

I want to thank Chairman Huffman and the Subcommittee for holding this hearing. I am honored to speak today on my bill, H.R. 1162, the Water Recycling Investment and Improvement Act.

Strains on our water supplies due to climate change, drought, and population growth have increased steadily in Southern California and across the nation over the past few decades, underscoring the critical need for greater federal assistance. The federal government must start prioritizing and funding water recycling programs in order to prepare the 17 western states for future periods of drought.

The Bureau of Reclamation's "Title XVI," water recycling program, has proven to be the most cost-effective in improving water supply, by providing long-term savings, while boosting job growth and lowering our reliance on imported potable water. Title XVI provides cost-shared funding for water recycling projects, that reclaim and reuse municipal, industrial, domestic or agricultural wastewater, and, naturally impaired ground or surface waters across the West.

My legislation, H.R. 1162, would increase Title XVI's authorization from \$50 million to \$500 million, giving local water agencies the necessary funding to increase capacities for existing recycling plants or create new cost-effective projects to boost water supplies.

Not only do these projects create jobs and boost our local economies, farms, and businesses, but Title XVI projects can be brought on-line with “wet” water in as little as two-years. These projects provide long-term savings, which is why water districts and sanitation agencies are overwhelmingly supportive of this program.

Since 1992, Congress has authorized 53 Title XVI recycling projects, producing more than 400,000 acre-feet of drought-resistant water supply. Unfortunately, due to the lack of funding, there is currently a backlog of \$464 million for congressionally authorized Title XVI projects, demonstrating a clear need to continue and expand funding. This is unacceptable, and why I introduced my bill to increase the authorization so that we can begin to address the backlog and provide more drought protection.

Our communities greatly need our support in developing local, sustainable water supplies through Title XVI projects. The Federal government has an important role to play, in working with local water managers, to modernize America’s water infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population and a changing climate.

It’s a no brainer: we have to explore new ways to expand our water portfolio, and, water recycling is one of the best ways to do so. I urge the Administration to take this issue seriously, and, support increased and robust funding for the Title XVI program.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record letters of support for H.R. 1162 from: the Association of California Water Agencies, WaterReuse, the Metropolitan Water District, the Orange County Water District, the National Water Resources Association, the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, and the Western Recycled Water Coalition.

(ATTACHED)

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1162.