

**Statement of Michael L. Connor, Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Department of the Interior
Before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Subtitle D of the American Clean Energy Leadership Act of 2009,
S. 1462 (111th Congress)
March 31, 2011**

Chairman Bingaman, Ranking Member Murkowski and Members of the Committee, I am Mike Connor, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). I am pleased to be here alongside the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to provide the views of the Department of the Interior (Department) on the Reclamation-specific provisions in Subtitle D of the American Clean Energy Leadership Act of 2009, S. 1462 from the 111th Congress. This subtitle promotes the integration of energy and water policies to address the challenges that exist in making sustainable use of finite natural resources. Two sections of this bill call for specific deliverables from Reclamation: Section 143 and Section 144. Reclamation is continuing to explore ways to improve energy efficiencies within the scope of its projects.

Section 143: Energy Usage Study

Section 143 directs Reclamation to conduct a study on the quantities of energy used in water storage and delivery operations in major Reclamation projects, with an emphasis on identifying opportunities to reduce water and energy consumption and costs. The energy usage study required by Section 143 may provide a helpful data point for project managers and water customers. Facilitating sustainability of the Nation's natural resources is one of the Department's highest priorities. Through our WaterSMART program, the Department is committed to integrating energy and water policies to promote the sustainable use of all resources, including incorporating water conservation criteria and the water/energy nexus into the Department's planning efforts, including recommendations to reduce conflict in water management. Within existing operations and budget authority, Reclamation strives to operate its projects with the maximum amount of energy efficiency, and Reclamation is working to meet a Departmental Priority Goal for Water Conservation through implementation of the WaterSMART Program. This program was created by Secretarial Order 3297, issued on February 22, 2010 (available at http://elips.doi.gov/app_SO/act_getfiles.cfm?order_number=3297). WaterSMART specifically recognizes that water and energy are inextricably linked and that water conservation can yield significant energy conservation benefits too.

WaterSMART Grants and Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse projects funded in FY 2010 are expected to enable the conservation of an estimated 149,000 acre-feet of water each year once complete. Fiscal Year 2011 grants are awaiting completion of the appropriations process. With funds requested in FY 2012, we will seek to increase the 2010 total by an additional 140,000 acre-feet. The energy savings associated with this conservation will vary greatly from

project to project, but a study focused across the Reclamation program is likely to provide valuable context for Reclamation's water conservation efforts generally and identify new opportunities for increasing efficiency.

Overall, Reclamation has already been actively integrating energy and water policies under its existing activities. Under the WaterSMART Program's Water and Energy Efficiency Grants, which fund projects that help to meet the Priority Goal for Water Conservation, Reclamation incentivizes the conservation of energy in the delivery of water. Proposals that not only address water conservation but also explore the use of renewable energy and other energy efficiency improvements receive additional consideration during the selection process. In Fiscal Year 2010, through its WaterSMART program, Reclamation awarded 37 water and energy efficiency grants for amounts as high as \$1 million, including a number of funded proposals that explored the relationship between water efficiency improvements and energy savings. We aim to continue these WaterSMART projects in FY 2011. If the legislation before the Committee today were enacted, the study authorized by Section 143 would need to compete for resources within the existing Reclamation program.

Section 144: Uses of the Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility

Section 144 calls for specific research objectives and authorizes operation, management, maintenance, and cost recovery at the Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility (Facility) in Otero County, New Mexico. The directives in Section 144 relative to the Facility in New Mexico would be consistent with ongoing activities at the Facility. Reclamation is partnered with New Mexico State University in a four-year research program with projects at or associated with the Facility focused on research, education, and outreach in water desalination. The bill language calls on Reclamation to operate and manage the Facility as a state-of-the-art desalination research center to develop new water and energy technologies with widespread applicability, and create new supplies of usable water for municipal, agricultural, industrial, or environmental purposes. The bill also authorizes Reclamation to collect charges to offset the costs of operating and maintaining the Facility.

As members of the Committee may know, one of the authorities to operate and maintain the Facility stems from Public Law 104-298, as amended, commonly known as the Water Desalination Act of 1996. The Desalination Act has been funding research at the lab scale leading to pilot and demonstration testing at the Facility. The Facility, as well as Reclamation's desalination program generally, provides a venue for the award of competitive, cost-shared cooperative agreements with universities and public and private sector organizations for the purpose of research on converting unusable waters into usable water supplies. The Facility represents an avenue to advance the real-world potential of water desalination. The Desalination Act's current authority expires at the end of the 2011 fiscal year, and its extension by the Congress for a term of five years could enable this important research to continue. Providing these authorities could help Reclamation develop water-related technologies and other water management practices and may also potentially enhance U.S. competitiveness in providing solutions to world-wide water issues in the 21st century. We look forward to working with the

Congress on S. 1462 to avoid duplication of activities that are already being performed by the Bureau of Reclamation.

This concludes my written statement. I am pleased to answer any questions the Committee may have.