

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI
OPENING STATEMENT
WATER RESOURCE ISSUES IN THE KLAMATH RIVER BASIN
June 20, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this roundtable to discuss Klamath River Basin issues. I can certainly appreciate how difficult these water issues are for stakeholders within your home state of Oregon and for those in California. After decades of litigation and conflict, I am pleased to see so many diverse witnesses before us today.

I think most people would agree that as Chairman of the Energy Committee, Senator Wyden wants to ensure that everybody has a chance to speak and be heard. Today's hearing epitomizes this all-inclusive approach. I would venture to say that the Chairman has gone out of his way to make sure that we have stakeholders representing every interest, including farmers, Indian Tribes, commercial and sport fisherman, power producers, environmental groups, municipal water users, outdoor enthusiasts and advocates for federal wildlife refuges. I look forward to hearing their perspectives on the two Klamath Basin agreements, the purposes and goals of which include:

- allocating water resources so farming, tribal, recreational, wildlife and fishing interests are protected;
- restoring the fisheries in the basin;
- removing four dams while continuing to provide affordable power to agricultural communities;
- improving habitat and water quality; and
- ensuring no further degradation of Basin resources.

The issues we will hear about today are complex and challenging, particularly in an era of limited federal dollars. But, I believe this hearing will provide the Chairman with a better understanding of how to proceed on Klamath River issues in the future. I look forward to hearing from our distinguished panel.