

Opening Statement of Grace F. Napolitano
Water and Power Subcommittee Oversight Hearing on Quagga Mussels
Tuesday, June 24, 2008

On January 6, 2007, divers discovered tiny mussels attached to water intake structures in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, later identified as the invasive Quagga Mussels, native to the Black and Caspian Seas, possibly transported on a boat previously used in the Great Lakes.

By the time the mussels are seen at fingernail size- they are in the thousands. These mussels now attach themselves to water intakes and power infrastructure and multiply. Without continued proper maintenance, they would eventually block and clog pipe systems, and when scraped off created rust.

We need to learn of any research that the private, federal, state and local entities, and how best to protect our dwindling water infrastructure, water supply and the environment from invasives like the Quagga and Zebra Mussel. We must share technological advances and work towards a collaborative focus to best defeat and control aquatic invasives.

We can and must balance keeping our water supply safe from invasives while also keeping our recreation sites safe and open to the public. We must have boaters and water agencies working as partners, being vigilant in public outreach, education and awareness to stop the spread of these invasives. We look forward to your testimony to help us all learn of the success of the Great Lakes in controlling these mussels.