

**OPENING STATEMENT**  
**The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen**  
**Chairman, Energy and Water Development Subcommittee**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Hearing on the Bureau of Reclamation**  
**FY 2013 Budget Request**  
**March 28, 2012**

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I'd like to call this hearing to order. Good morning, everyone. Our hearing today is on the fiscal year 2013 budget request for the Bureau of Reclamation.

I'd like to welcome our witness, Michael Connor, Commissioner of Reclamation, back to the subcommittee.

Mr. Commissioner, your Bureau's mission clearly states your primary responsibility is to meet the water demands of the West, while protecting the environment and the public's investments in these structures. Water and power remain fundamental to the economy of the western United States, and the Bureau of Reclamation's activities are critical to meeting these needs.

While your investments in water supply, delivery and power are growing more important as population expands in the West, the age of your infrastructure is also increasing. You must find the proper balance between making new investments and maintaining the critical infrastructure you already have – a balance which your budget request tries to strike.

Last year we talked about another balance – that between your economic development and environmental restoration activities. I regret that this budget request raises even more questions than it answers. While your overall request for fish and wildlife management programs does not increase this year, you do not adequately explain the long-term implications of these proposed investments. In a world of flat budgets, I worry that the potential growth of these environmental projects may significantly eat into your ability to accomplish your primary mission – to meet the water demands of the West.

Mr. Connor, please ensure that the hearing record, questions for the record, and any supporting information requested by the Subcommittee are delivered in final form to us no later than four weeks from the time you receive them. Members who have additional questions for the record will have until close of business tomorrow to provide them to the Subcommittee office.

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