

**Statement by the Honorable Paul Gosar**  
**Vice Chairman of the House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee**  
**Oversight Hearing on**  
***“Examining the Proposed Fiscal Year 2016 Spending, Priorities and the Missions of the***  
***Bureau of Reclamation, the Four Power Marketing Administrations and the***  
***U.S. Geological Survey’s Water Resources program”***  
**March 24, 2015**

As Vice-Chair of the Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee, I believe it’s important that Congress provide continual oversight on the missions, management and spending of the federal water and power agencies before us today. This is an important bipartisan endeavor since these budget hearings span Democrat and Republicans administrations and different majorities within this chamber.

Two of the agencies before us today have a tremendous impact on my arid home state of Arizona. The Bureau of Reclamation has two flagship reservoirs on the Colorado River and the Western Area Power Administration markets the power from these facilities and the Navajo Generating Station. It’s safe to say that Arizona and the West would not be what it is today without these and other visionary projects. Our economy, our environment and our way of life are dependent on the water and renewable power generated from these projects.

As such, these agencies must be accountable to the millions of ratepayers and taxpayers who pay the ever-increasing bills levied by these agencies. For example, we all know that historic drought is gripping most of the West. One of the impacts of this is decreased hydropower generation. This has historically led to rate increases, yet we must ask the agencies before us whether they are doing all they can internally to keep costs down to decrease rate spikes. We must also ensure that these agencies are not living under the constant fear of Endangered Species Act litigation aimed at diverting or rationing these once-abundant resources.

We must also examine if these agencies are working together or against each other. The Western Area Power Administration – a Department of Energy entity - is supposed to operate within quote “sound business principles” unquote, yet a third of the hydropower generation that it markets from Glen Canyon Dam is now gone due to Interior Department regulations.

In fact, as I understand it, there is a remarkable difference of opinion between the two departments on the ratepayer cost associated with the pending Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan at Glen Canyon. Once again, we have an issue where one arm of the government is directly harming the other – at ratepayer expense.

We must also ensure that these agencies are as transparent as possible. While I understand that the Power Marketing Administrations do not plan to increase staff in this coming fiscal year, there has been ratepayer concern in the past of non-transparent staff additions. In addition, the Bureau of Reclamation has failed to provide Congress with the adequate information needed to determine funding priorities for the agency's aging infrastructure. That's why I recently introduced H.R. 1107, the Bureau of Reclamation Transparency Act, with some of my colleagues here with us today. This bipartisan and bicameral bill is designed to allow us to better understand the agency's infrastructure backlog so resources can be prioritized in coming years.

In conclusion, the agencies before us have been instrumental to our Nation. They can continue to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they must adapt to the growing needs for transparency, efficiency and accountability. Today we have the privilege of hearing how your agencies plan on achieving those goals.