

*March 28th, 2012*

**Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. Peter Visclosky**

"Mr. Connor, welcome back to the Subcommittee. I look forward to your testimony and thank you for joining us today.

"The Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for providing agricultural, municipal, and industrial water supply in the West. Economies, ecosystems, and communities all rely on the availability of clean water. At a time when demand is increasing and many regions have been hit by extended drought, the Bureau is increasingly being asked to provide solutions to the West's water needs while being good stewards of our natural resources. I hope to hear today how the fiscal year 2013 budget request reflects this responsibility with reduced financial resources.

"Reclamation's budget request for Water and Related Resources represents a four percent reduction from that of 2012. And while we are all interested in finding appropriate places to cut, I have some concerns that this reduced request continues the disinvestment in the nation's water resource infrastructure. Therefore, it will be especially important that the Subcommittee understands the specific methodology used to arrive at the Bureau's particular set of projects and activities.

"Additionally, much of the Bureau's infrastructure was built nearly a century ago—in fact, over half of the Bureau's dams are more than 60 years old. It is critical that Reclamation maintain this aging infrastructure, and I hope today to explore how the budget request provides funding levels that meet the Bureau's responsibility to keep Americans safe while maintaining its dams in proper working order.

"Reclamation plays a vital role in delivering water to tribes and rural communities that could not otherwise access clean water. I appreciate that the Administration's budget request continues to meet the nation's obligation under the Indian Water Rights Settlements.

"We are all interested in ensuring that every dollar is spent effectively and efficiently, and I look forward to your testimony today on how Reclamation plans to accomplish this goal.

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the time."