



July 25, 2007

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II
Chair, Natural Resources Committee
United States House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young
Ranking Member, Natural Resources Committee
United States House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

VIA FACSIMILE TO: (202) 225-1931 and (202) 225-5929

Dear Chairman Rahall and Ranking Member Young:

Please accept this letter as a statement for the record at the upcoming July 31, 2007, full Committee oversight hearing: "Crisis of Confidence: The Political Influence of the Bush Administration on Agency Science and Decision-Making."

Those of us in the Pacific Northwest who earn a living from resource-based industries, like agriculture, timber and fisheries, have experienced firsthand the political forces at work that have wrought great havoc on our industries and communities through bureaucratic edict and judicial fiat.

Since we understand the Committee will be focusing at least in part on decisions relating to the Klamath Basin, we will restrain our comments to that issue.

Washington Farm Bureau and its nearly 35,000 member families is proud to support our friends and colleagues who farm, ranch and fish in the Klamath Basin.

In 2001, they were faced with an unprecedented loss of water to some 200,000 acres of farmland under irrigation. This posed a serious and immediate threat to their livelihoods, local economy and way of life.

While it could be argued that both the decision to stop the flow of water and to restore it were based more on political calculations than sound science, it cannot be disputed that the residents of the Klamath Basin faced a very real and very dire situation with potentially devastating

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consequences. And they faced it head on.

We applaud their efforts to employ innovative techniques and new technology to improve irrigation efficiency, implement effective water conservation measures, undertake environmental restoration projects, and expand conservation program participation.

We also commend them for launching a broad-based stakeholder group composed of competing interests that is actively working to craft long-term solutions to water supply concerns that balance the needs of local producers – and the people they feed – with habitat improvements and other environmental goals.

They are proving what we have long known, when empowered and freed from outside interference and restrictions, local communities can find effective solutions that promote economic growth while providing environmental protection.

While this hearing's title would seem to indicate otherwise, it is our sincere hope that the Committee will objectively evaluate the use of sound science in both agency and judicial decisions, and examine how such actions have placed local communities and resource-based industries in jeopardy as well as whether the relevant environmental goals were reasonable and obtainable, or have actually been met.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment for the record.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Appel, President
Washington Farm Bureau