

- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. I want to thank this committee for providing the opportunity for Members to present on our priorities and projects as you work to write the Water Resources Development Act.
- Last year, Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. By passing this historic legislation, we are investing in a better future for America – one focused on an equitable future, rather than restoring the past.
- I have long said that we are living off the investments that our parents (and our grandparents) made a generation (or two) ago. Now, with the funding provided through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are finally making long-needed investments of our own.
- Now, we have the opportunity to leverage the investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law through advancement of the WRDA bill.
- Our water infrastructure is aging. We absolutely need to continue investing in clean drinking water and improving watersheds to protect water quality. At the same time, we also need to invest in our overall water supply and to protect communities threatened by flooding. The food on American tables every night depends on a reliable water supply.

- The reality of climate change has made supporting more reliable water reserves even more critical. We all know the Western United States is once again experiencing severe drought conditions. According to some experts, this year was merely the continuation of a so-called “megadrought” happening over the last 20 years across the west.
- In California, 2021 was the second driest year in a record spanning more than 100 years. The more frequent and more intense droughts caused by climate change require us to plan, adapt, and rethink how we manage our infrastructure and utilize our resources.
- With that in mind, I want to highlight a proposal in my district to reoperate the Redbank and Fancher Creeks Project. These reservoirs were originally designed primarily for flood control but local water managers are proposing it be reoperated to maximize groundwater recharge in wet years.
- This is critical for improving the long-term sustainability of depleted groundwater basins and for improving water supply reliability by having more water on hand in dry years. With ongoing drought and limited surface water supplies, we must use every tool in our water toolbox to maximize our water supply by getting the most out of our water infrastructure.

- We also have the opportunity to utilize Army Corps programs to enhance critical habitats for listed species and make ecosystem improvements to rivers and watersheds. Such efforts in California—if done carefully and in collaboration with impacted stakeholders—have the opportunity to not only provide greater water supply reliability for the largest agricultural economy in the United States, but to also improve conditions for threatened and endangered species.
- In California, we are on the verge of trying a new approach to adaptively manage our water system, known as Voluntary Agreements. If successful, the Voluntary Agreements give us the opportunity to create a more collaborative management structure compared to current regulatory efforts. This strategy would also avoid costly and time-consuming litigation, make progress on developing a more reliable water system in California, and kickstart ecosystem restoration efforts that would benefit iconic rivers, species, and the Bay-Delta.
- Successfully implementing the Voluntary Agreements requires a collaborative partnership between local stakeholders, the State of California, and the federal government to restore the reliability of domestically produced food supply and to restore nationally important ecosystems.

WRDA T&I Members' Day Remarks (5 minutes)

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- I hope to work with this committee, and the Army Corps, to make federal investment and technical assistance available to successfully implement these game-changing efforts.
- Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with you on this critical legislation to ensure it maximizes the benefits to my constituents in California's San Joaquin Valley and to our nation.