

Statement of
The Honorable Brett R. Barbre
Director, Yorba Linda Water District (YLWD)

September 16, 2026

Chair Hageman, Ranking Member Hoyle, distinguished Members of the subcommittee, my name is Brett R. Barbre, and I am currently serving in my sixth year as an elected Director of the Yorba Linda Water District (YLWD), an Independent Special District that provides water and sewer services to ~73,000 customers in the city of Yorba Linda and portions of the cities of Anaheim, Brea, Placentia, and several unincorporated communities in Orange County, California.

The city of Yorba Linda is best known as the Birthplace of our 37th President, Richard M. Nixon, and is also home to the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

The Yorba Linda Water District is known nationally in water circles for two innovative projects – the Nation’s Largest PFAS Ion Exchange Water Treatment Plant, and, given that we reside in a high fire area with frequent wildfires fanned by the Santa Ana winds, we helped perfect and install the Nation’s first two Heli-Hydrants, a game-changing technology that provides unlimited fresh water for firefighting helicopters in the Urban-Wildland Interface Area.

Finally, in the northwest hills of Yorba Linda is one of the nation’s largest water treatment plants, the Robert B. Diemer Water Treatment Plant (Diemer), which is owned and operated by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). In addition to hosting Yorba Linda’s third Heli-Hydrant, Diemer treats and serves water imported from both the MWD-owned and operated Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) and the California State Water Project (SWP).

Previously, I served for over 20 years as Director of the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) and for 11 years as an appointed Director of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD).

I appreciate the opportunity to be here this morning to share a few thoughts regarding Congressman McClintock’s bill, HR 177, the Yosemite National Park Equal Access and Fairness Act.

As a native Californian, I believe Yosemite is one of the most breathtaking national parks in our nation. Visitors from all over the world venture to visit what John Muir referred to as a “living temple of nature,” and it is a natural resource to be protected and preserved for future generations.

When the City and County of San Francisco approached the United States in order to obtain the right to build the O’Shaughnessy Dam and create the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, there was an expected mutual benefit to the citizens of the United States, which granted that right through the approval of the Raker Act. Unfortunately, the imbalance between the beneficiaries of the water and power from Hetch Hetchy and the citizens of this country is noted in several sections of Mr. McClintock’s bill.

The amendment to Section 2 of the Raker Act recognizes that charging an annual fee for the right to use the water and generate power is far greater than the initial amount delineated in 1913 of \$30,000. The new sum of \$2,000,000 per year is reasonable, and including an annual adjustment equal to the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers is more than fair.

The amendment to section 12 of the Raker Act adds a recreation benefit that is consistent with many other systems and reservoirs throughout the state of California.

Historically dams in California and the west were constructed to provide four benefits to the community at large:

- 1) Water Storage;
- 2) Flood Control;
- 3) Power Generation;
- 4) Recreation.

Of the major water and power infrastructure constructed over the past 100+ years in the state of California and on the Colorado River, most provide the above benefits to the stewards of our resources, the taxpayers of our state and nation, as a trade off for using those resources.

But not all systems are treated equally. Please consider the following:

1923 – The first deliveries of the Hetch Hetchy system occurred, with a storage capacity of 360,000 acre feet, was formed by the construction of the O’Shaughnessy Dam. Power generation is also an added benefit.

1936 – Hoover Dam was completed, creating Lake Mead, the nation’s largest reservoir at

28.5 million acre feet of storage. It also provided flood control, power generation, and significant recreational benefits.

1939 – The first deliveries of the Colorado River Aqueduct, with a total capacity today of 1.2 million acre feet, was made possible through the construction of Parker Dam, which created Lake Havasu, which has a storage capacity of 646,000 acre feet. Flood control, full body contact, recreational boating (power boats included), and power generation are a benefit of Parker.

1940 – The first deliveries of the Central Valley Project, with a current capacity of 7 million acre feet. The Central Valley Project system has over 13.4 million acre feet of storage capacity through 20 major dams, the largest of which is Shasta Dam, which has a storage capacity of 4.5 million acre feet. Flood control, full body contact, recreational boating (power boats included), and power generation are included as a benefit.

1973 – The completion and first deliveries statewide of the State Water Project, which has an annual delivery capacity of 4.2 million acre feet. The State Water Project system has over 5.8 million acre feet of storage capacity, with the largest being Oroville Dam, at 3.5 million acre feet. Flood control, full body contact, recreational boating (power boats included), and power generation are included as a benefit.

Hetch Hetchy should be treated no better and no worse than any other system that provides benefits to our fellow citizens. Though Hetch Hetchy was paid for entirely by the taxpayers of the City and County of San Francisco, it is reasonable to annually reimburse the nation for the use of the resources. That was included in the original bill, and should be adjusted to take into consideration the increase in the CPI since 1913.

The addition of allowing minimal recreational activities on the reservoir is also consistent with all other major systems throughout California and the Colorado River system. The lack of recreation on this system removes the necessity to comply with certain water quality standards and basic treatment of the water delivered.

This concludes my statement and will be happy to respond to any questions.

Thank you.