

Garrison Diversion manager testifies on rural water funding bills

(Carrington, N.D.) Dave Koland, Garrison Diversion manager, testified in Washington, D.C. today on three separate Senate bills that involve rural water funding. He was one of three people asked to comment on the legislation, which addresses funding levels, eligibility criteria, water quality benefits and water supply needs.

Koland's testimony emphasized the need to fund and support development of rural water projects. "The present policy of denying adequate funding to currently authorized projects is a travesty. This treatment of people on the verge of realizing the dream of finally having a reliable water supply is not justified under any circumstances."

North Dakota, even with erratic federal funding, has wisely used Federal dollars by making use of local dollars and local support. Koland encouraged the committee to continue looking at how Federal and local entities can work together.

"A forward-looking Federal policy will focus efforts on providing access to rural water in areas that do not have a reliable supply of quality water now," said Koland. He continued, "The policy should encourage the inception of projects at the local level. Projects that are driven by a local need will be better able to sustain themselves through the already too long gestation period from the recognition of a need to the completion of construction."

Koland's position was supportive of regional projects and the Federal government looking toward providing a solution. He highlighted specific concerns about the three bills and provided suggested changes. He ended his remarks by emphasizing the need to continue to work together in meeting the desperate needs of both rural and Indian areas across the country.

"A Federal policy that guides the orderly development and timely construction of this rural infrastructure will benefit all our citizens," Koland stated. "The provision of a high-quality, reliable water supply has been changing the face of rural America. A reliable, safe drinking water supply has helped stabilize the population of rural counties, afforded additional opportunities for economic development, and provided a better quality of life for our citizens."

For more information or to read Dave Koland's testimony, visit www.garrisondiversion.org

For more information on Garrison Diversion or the material printed above, contact Maria Effertz Hanson, 701-652-5776 or gdcd@daktel.com