



DESAL BILL GETS POSITIVE RECEPTION FROM HOUSE COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., September 9, 2004 – Chairman Ken Calvert of the House Water and Power Subcommittee held a hearing today to discuss H.R. 3834, The Desalination Energy Assistance Act of 2004. Brett Barbre of the Municipal Water District of Orange County in California and Mike Slayton of the St. Johns River Water Management District in Florida were called to testify on behalf of The U.S. Desalination Coalition on the legislation. Mr. Slayton was unable to attend the hearing due to responsibilities resulting from Hurricane Frances and his testimony was made a part of the official record. Congressman Jim Davis, the chief sponsor of the legislation, was also present to offer comments in support of the legislation. Other Subcommittee members present at the hearing were Ranking Member Grace Napolitano of California, Tom Osborn of Nebraska, Joe Baca of California and Jay Inslee of Washington.

Brett Barbre did an excellent job on behalf of the coalition and appropriately stated that “the choice for desalination is clear. We can wait for catastrophic water supply crisis or we can act now”. Mike Slayton’s testimony echoed this sentiment by stating that “the future of our nations water supply is simply too important to ignore. Whether or not these projects get built in time to address the mounting water supply crises is largely dependent on whether the federal government makes a commitment to invest in this new infrastructure.”

All comments by subcommittee members were very positive and both Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member Napolitano commended Congressman Davis for recognizing desalination as a critical tool in solving our nations water supply problems and for introducing the bill. In his opening remarks Chairman Calvert stated that “while the federal government cannot solve all of our water problems, Congress can and should provide help to communities trying to “drought proof” themselves”. Citing the fact that H.R. 3834 has 31 cosponsors from both political parties, the Chairman said the legislation has “significant traction” and he looks forward to moving it through the political process. Ranking Member Napolitano also vowed her support and asked to be included as the bill’s 32nd cosponsor.