

Opening Statement
Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
Technology Research and Development Efforts Related to the Energy and Water Linkage

July 9, 2009

Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

This summer, my home state of South Carolina got the good news that we finally emerged from a long and difficult two year drought. The drought forced us to consider how we use water at home, in irrigation, and for industrial use. Especially in the upstate, we'll be dealing with the long-term impacts of this drought for quite some time.

I bring this up to highlight the importance of water scarcity in the decisions we make in our economy and communities. Climate change will further stress our water resources and make water management more difficult. While we need to make wise decisions to minimize our impact on the natural environment, we also need to consider how changes in our environment may impact the way we do business.

Electricity generation is the second largest source of freshwater withdrawals in the United States. The technologies we use today are very water inefficient, despite the availability of cooling systems that substantially reduce our water needs. As we change our choice of fuels in order to minimize our greenhouse gas emissions, we should also work to minimize the strain we put on our limited water resources. I'm encouraged by the work of DOE's National Energy Technology Laboratory to develop the technologies that will reduce our water withdrawal and consumption.

Fossil fuel and renewable energy resources also demand a considerable amount of energy in the generation process. I am looking forward to learning about the technologies and techniques that will help us recover and use this energy with a limited impact on other natural resources.

There's one aspect of energy and water linkage that this hearing fails to address. Our oceans are a tremendous source of kinetic energy that we can harness without consuming water. Despite millions of dollars in federal investment, not a single project to harness that energy has been added to our electricity grid. I hope that our committee will explore these alternatives at the cutting edge of renewable energy development.

Thank you again for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

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