

Opening Statement of Rep. Ralph M. Hall
Ranking Member
Committee on Science and Technology
Full Committee Hearing
Water Supply Challenges for the 21st Century

May 14, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased we are having this hearing today. Water supply is a very critical issue facing our country. Water is the life-blood of our economy. Every sector requires it and would be crippled without it. Energy and agriculture are the two largest consumers of water, but it is also a vital part of manufacturing, fishing, and obviously, everyday living.

Water's importance to U.S. prosperity is one that has been discussed in various reports over the last decade, government-sponsored and private-sector alike. It has hit home for some of us, where our districts have been subjected to periods of long drought or massive flooding. This Congress is well aware of the dangers of water shortages and over-abundance.

Two years ago, we passed, and the President signed, the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006. We did this in response to a need for a centralized location for drought information. I am very pleased the Dr. Pulwarty is here to talk about it. Although this law is not the only answer, it is part of the larger solution required for good water policy and management.

What we need are the proper tools and resources for local, state and regional decision-makers to adapt to changing conditions. I look forward to hearing from the panelists today on possible solutions to our nation's water challenges. I yield back the balance of my time.