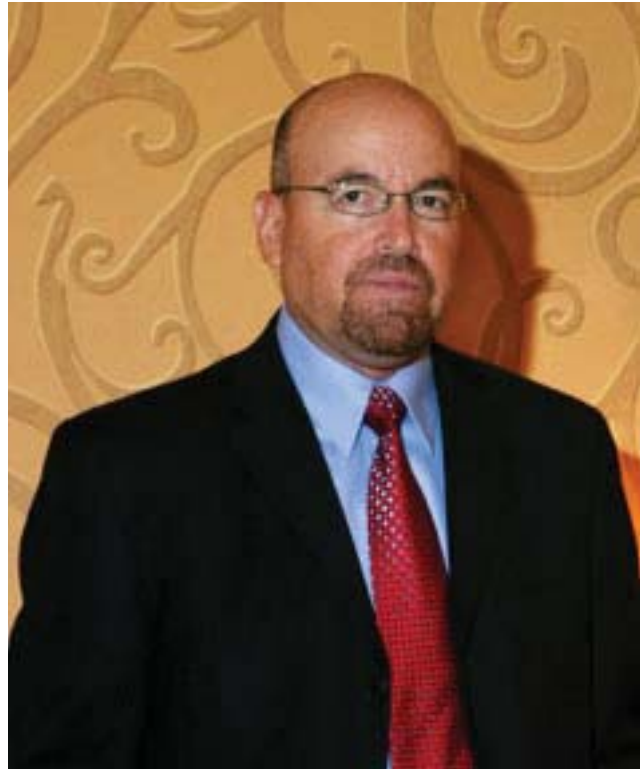


Michael Gabaldon became Director of the Technical Resources Office in the Denver office of the Bureau of Reclamation in 2008. He oversees the Technical Service Center, Research and Development Program, the Power Office, and the Dam Safety Officer/Design Engineering and Construction Office. Since 2006, Mike had been Director of the Technical Service Center in the Denver office. He began his career with Reclamation in 1982 as a Rotation Engineer at the Montrose Projects Office in Colorado. He worked in various positions in the Northwest region until 1998 when he was selected as the Area Manager for one of Reclamation's largest area offices, the Albuquerque Area Office. He was responsible for Reclamation program activities in the Rio Grande basin, the Pecos River basin, and the Canadian River basin - spanning three states from southeastern Colorado through New Mexico and south to west Texas. In 2001, Mike relocated to Washington, D.C, to serve as the Deputy Director of Operations. He remained in that position until 2003 when Commissioner John Keys promoted Mike to the position of Director of the Policy, Management, and Technical Services organization in Denver, CO. A native of Belen, New Mexico, Mike received a B.S. degree in civil engineering from the University of New Mexico and an associate's degree in Water Technology/Utilities from New Mexico State University.



## SECURE Water Act – Senate Bill 2156 Impact on USBR Programs

Michael Gabaldon, Director  
Technical Resources Office  
Bureau of Reclamation  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Thank you Karl for that great introduction. The important part of Karl's introduction is referring to me as "our own" Mike Gabaldon and I appreciate that. I did grow up in the Middle Valley just south of here in Belen. I grew up on a small farm, and many of you who have been around New Mexico for awhile either lived through or are aware of the pretty bad drought we had in mid 1950s. In the mid '50s, my father was farming downstream and because of the drought, there wasn't a whole lot of water around. Therefore, there wasn't a whole lot of farming. My father wasn't too busy and since my mother was helping my father on the farm, she wasn't busy either. They were pretty bored during

this drought period, and out of this boredom they got together and had me. And 52 years later, here I am, a direct product of the drought and it may have been inevitable that I would be working in water one day. But to show how bad the drought was, I have six brothers and six sisters!

Matt Lawson used some of his Spanish a few minutes ago and I will start off with a dicho. Those of us in New Mexico know that dichos are the little lessons that our parents usually tell us. One that I was reminded of that my father told me was "Buenos son mis vecinos, pero me faltan dos gallinas," translates to "I have great

neighbors, but I am missing two chickens.” I don’t know how that relates to water and what we are all doing here, but the lesson of that is – hey I have really good neighbors, and if I happen to have some spare chickens, feel free to take them. Working in collaboration and cooperatively with each other I think is the best way to go.

On behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and Commissioner Bob Johnson, who couldn’t be here today, we do also want to acknowledge and thank Senators Bingaman and Domenici for their leadership in the SECURE water legislation that we see as very rewarding and critical to our country, especially here in the West. As Mike Connor mentioned, the BOR has been working closely with him, we have suggested some language for the bill, and the bill is looking pretty good. Hopefully, it will go through Congress.

The legislation would authorize substantial new investments in western water management. I’m going to repeat some of the things that have already been said but I will mention a few other things. S-2256 does contemplate a number of task forces, basically data gathering efforts. The data can then be used by water managers to figure out what to do with the water resources that we do have. In fact several of the initiatives in the SECURE water bill line up with the Water for America initiative that Secretary Kempthorne is supporting. We believe that many, many of the goals in this bill expand the data acquisition effort, and following analysis of that data, ensure decision makers in water management on critically important operations.

The congressional subcommittee on Water Availability and Quality and the White House subcommittee on which I serve prepared a report in 2007 that contained many of the goals that line up with the SECURE Water Act. Five elements in the 2007 report do a really good job of lining up with the act. For example, the report calls for implementing a national water census, developing a new generation of water monitoring techniques, developing and expanding technologies for enhancing the available water supply, and improving our understanding of water ecosystems, thereby improving hydrologic prediction models and how those models are applied.

It is easy to forget that water is finite. New Mexico is very fortunate to have two senators who understand that water is finite and that we need to do something about it. The U.S. population is growing at an incredibly fast rate especially in the West. Nevada over the last 10 years has grown by 60 percent. Arizona is not

too far behind. Areas of population growth like New Mexico and Colorado happen to be where water is very scarce. The SECURE Water Act contains several measures that are dedicated and designed to take proactive steps to meet the water needs of the 21st century.

I will talk about a couple of specific sections of the act that apply to the Bureau of Reclamation. The climate change adaptation, Section 4 of the legislation, authorizes the Secretary to implement climate change adaptation programs and requires the Secretary to report to Congress on how climate change is affecting water resources and water supplies in the West. It directs and requires the Secretary to collect this information and supply reports to Congress on a regular basis. I think right now it is set up as an annual report. We recognize and agree with the premise set forth in that, and that it is important that we assess the potential impacts of climate change to our water supplies, reservoirs, and river systems.

Effective adaptation will also depend on better monitoring, better knowledge, and that is where the USGS kicks in that information. We will work with the USGS, as we always have, plus the Corps of Engineers, EPA, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We are working together to develop some strategies to try and get ahead of some water planning issues. The SECURE Water Act is going to plug right into those areas.

Another area in the SECURE Water Act, Section 5, provides new permanent authority for the BOR to issue water conservation grants to qualified entities. This is kind of a takeoff from the Water 2025 program that we have been using. Many of you are familiar with the program and have taken advantage of it and been funded through Water 2025 cost sharing. Water 2025 focuses attention on the reality that we have a limited water resource, populations are growing, and we have aging infrastructure that may not be adequate to meet the demands of the 21st century. Basically, Water 2025 focuses attention and funding on resources where there might be some confidence coming up, such as the clam issue we had a number of years ago, or the silvery minnow issue. Those are actually the genesis of Water 2025. The initiative was kicked off by then Secretary Gale and Commissioner John Keys, who at the time recognized a need to get ahead of these issues. The first few years of that program were funded through an annual appropriations process. The SECURE Water Act would give us permanent authorization, thereby improving the long-term effectiveness of that program so that the water users and local governments can

take advantage of that and know that the funding is coming.

Effects of climate change on hydro-electric power generation are dealt with in Section 6 of the SECURE Water Act. This section talks again about predicting what is coming up as far as climate variability and how that may affect hydro-electric generation. It actually directs the Secretary of Energy to work with power and marketing administration to assess and look at how climate change may have an effect on hydro-electric generation. We very much want to be part of that consultation. We are, along with the Corps of Engineers, the number one and the number two largest hydro-electric producers in the country, with BOR number two and the Corps number one. It is important that we also consult with the Secretary of Energy on those issues. We are the ones that schedule the releases into the system, and we are the ones who work hand in hand with the Corps of Engineers to do that, so it's important that we be part of this.

Climate change and the water inter-governmental panel has already been addressed. Section 7 of the SECURE Water Act just brings together a lot of different government entities and brings them to a panel to look at what is out there from a water management standpoint. Secretary Kempthorne in fact has already taken action on this front. He has put together a Department of Interior panel that is already working on this, so we look forward to expanding that into other federal agencies such as NOAA, the BOR, and the Corps of Engineers.

Let me switch over to the Water for America program for a minute. That's the initiative that Secretary Kempthorne kicked off a few years ago and moved forward with the fiscal year '09 request. It establishes a major partnership among the USGS and BOR and others, and it again goes back to gathering data and making sure we have the right tools for water management and we are prepared for the future. The initiative includes three strategies. First is to plan for our nation's strategy for the future. Second, is to develop a strategy to expand, protect, and conserve our nation's water resources to make sure we keep and protect and expand what we already have. The first deals with the future and the second with protecting what we already have. The third strategy is to enhance our nation's water knowledge. That goes back to USGS. Matt Larsen mentioned earlier that while the Senate was working on the SECURE Water Act, we were working on another act so it's great that we have the two lined up. The two acts have very

similar parts and pieces and several components that are similar.

The plan for our nation's water future, that first strategy, will include the BOR's longstanding investigations program and will also introduce a new basin studies program to look at basin-wide systems. A study will be done to see what the supply and demand is in those basins, which is something we really haven't done in the past. The second strategy to expand, protect, and conserve our nation's water resources will incorporate the best elements of a few other systems we have in place, including the Water 2025 program that I mentioned along with the Water Conservation for Services Program that a lot of you have probably benefited from in the past. It is a program we used at the BOR that died down but we are picking that back up, at least the very good pieces of it. We requested \$31.9 million for FY 2009 for the Water for America program; \$4 million for basin studies, \$4 million for investigations, \$11 million for Challenge Grants - and by the way, a request for proposals was just announced yesterday so if you haven't seen that yet and want to participate, take a look at our website. There is another \$4 million for the Water Conservation Services Program and \$8.9 million for the acceleration of critical ESA compliance activities. It is important to note that BOR will be able to fully implement these programs only if Congress approves the appropriations as well as some authorizations.

In addition, two new grants are being developed by the BOR. One grant promotes advanced water treatment such as reverse osmosis on brackish groundwater. It will look at what to do with concentrated disposal; looking at anything that has to do with desalination. We are working with New Mexico State University with Karl Wood and Bobby Creel on our Tularosa desalination facility that we dedicated about a year ago. We are working with NMSU on how we are going to operate the research facility. If anybody has potential desalination research, come talk to me or to Karl. The second new grant that we are looking at is called Species of Concern Grant and this grant will provide an avenue for collaboration with the stakeholders and water users to encourage actions that will improve the status of species before the water supply is credited. Again, this is something where we want to be proactive and get ahead of the issue. Those grants benefit federally listed species that are limited to ESA listed species, BOR projects, or actions.

In conclusion, through the strategies and programs described in Water for America and in the SECURE Water Act, we see that we are going to provide a vision

and leadership that is very much necessary to help meet the needs of the American people, especially those in the West, to expand and enhance the finite water resources that we all live with. Water is life, and it is part of our economy and we are all focused on the economy these days. You can't have a good economy without good water, without good agriculture, and without clean water. We will continue working with Congress and USGS and other organizations in moving these forward. Thank you.