

**STATEMENT OF
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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BEFORE THE
HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS
H.R. 523, DOUGLAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON, PUD CONVEYANCE ACT**

MAY 10, 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.R. 523. This legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain public lands located wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Wells Dam Hydroelectric Project [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Project No. 2149-19795] (Project) to Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County, WA, (PUD). The BLM supports this conveyance. During consideration of similar legislation in the 109th Congress (H.R. 4789), we raised several concerns. The BLM greatly appreciates the work by Rep. Hastings' staff and Subcommittee staff to address our concerns, as the text of H.R. 523 reflects. We look forward to working with the bill's sponsor and the Committee on the few key concerns still outstanding.

Since 1998, the PUD has expressed a strong desire to purchase all BLM-managed public lands within the Project boundaries. During the 109th Congress, we worked with the PUD to identify precisely which public lands it wishes to acquire, and we worked with the bill's sponsor to develop a map that correctly identifies these lands. Some of the public lands the PUD wishes to acquire are located within the boundaries of the Project. These were reserved for power site purposes by order of the Federal Power Commission (FPC Order dated July 12, 1962, for Power Project No. 2149). Some of the lands requested by the PUD lie outside (but contiguous to) the designated project boundary. We encourage the sponsor and the Committee to provide safeguards to protect the known resource values on these lands, which include Bald Eagle roosts and approximately two miles of Columbia River shoreline currently open to the public.

Section 3(f) of the legislation directs that the proceeds from the sales be deposited into the "working capital" funds of the BLM. We strongly recommend instead that these funds be deposited in the "Federal Land Disposal Account" established by P.L.106-248, the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I will be glad to answer questions.