

WASHINGTON – Bipartisan legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell to provide for long-term, regional efforts to protect endangered species along the Lower Colorado River has cleared an important committee vote and is one step closer to consideration by the House.

Mitchell and U.S. Rep. Dean Heller, R-Nev., introduced H.R. 2515, which authorizes the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Act (MSCP) last May. Mitchell has been working to build support for the legislation since, and said the bill protects our natural resources and addresses Arizona, Nevada and California's water and energy needs.

"This is a big win for Arizona," said Mitchell. "We've been waiting to make these improvements for many years and I'm proud to have worked to move this legislation forward."

Mitchell praised the Natural Resources Committee, and specifically U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., who serves as chairman of the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee, for working on issues important to Arizona. While Mitchell's legislation had been introduced in previous Congresses, it had been at a standstill for years.

"I am grateful for the hard work Representative Mitchell has put into this bill as one of the original cosponsors," said Grijalva. "It is due to his efforts the bill passed by unanimous consent in Natural Resources Committee today and I look forward to seeing it on the floor soon."

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Act was introduced in the 109th Congress by former U.S. Rep. J.D. Hayworth. The Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on the bill in 2006, but ultimately did not approve it.