Inheriting a city in distress, including a budget deficit close to $2 billion dollars and a seemingly uncontrollable crime rate, David Dinkins had his hands full. The city also faced racial tensions that needed attention quickly, which Mayor Dinkins provided. Mayor Dinkins was able to soothe the city amidst times of turmoil, stemming from disagreements across ethnicities, which were very common during his tenure as mayor. Mr. Dinkins left office after turning the budget deficit into a surplus, and acting as the peacemaker in the city.

As a professor of public affairs at Columbia University, Mr. Dinkins continues to work for others by providing young adults with an education. He is to be commended for his achievements. David Dinkins is a dear friend, and serves as an inspiration to me, as well as many others. As Americans, we should honor him by joining his family in celebration of his 80th birthday.

BILL TO PROMOTE COOPERATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN WATER PROJECTS

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the ''Greater Cooperation with Local Governments in Water Project Analysis Act.''

This bill would require the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, when acting as a lead federal agency for analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, NEPA, of certain water projects, to grant ''cooperating agency'' status to affected subdivisions of state governments if they seek that status.

The bill would apply to analysis of any project involving diversion of water from one river basin to another river basin and to any local government with jurisdiction over any portion of such a project.

Its purpose is to ensure a ''seat at the table'' for these local governments, to make sure they have the fullest opportunity to provide input regarding the potential impacts of such a project.

It's important to note that this bill would not give any state subdivision a ''veto'' of the water diversion project. It would only ensure the subdivision's more direct involvement of the analysis of such a project.

While the term ''cooperating agency'' is not part of the statutory language of NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality, CEQ, has issued regulations providing for that status in order to implement the NEPA mandate that Federal agencies responsible for preparing NEPA analyses and documentation do so ''in cooperation with State and local governments'' and other agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise.

As CEQ has noted, ''Studies regarding the efficiency, effectiveness, and value of NEPA analyses conclude that stakeholder involvement is important in ensuring decision-makers have the environmental information necessary to make informed and timely decisions efficiently. Cooperating agency status is a major component of agency stakeholder involvement that neither enlarges nor diminishes the decision-making authority of any agency involved in the NEP A process.'' (Memorandum for the Heads of Federal Agencies from James Connaughton, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality, January 30, 2002).

Having the status of a ''cooperating agency'' does involve some responsibilities as well as opportunities. But it is understandable that local governments often seek to be granted that status—and, at least with regard to the kind of projects covered by this bill, I think that if a local government seeks it, it should be granted.

I was prompted to introduce this bill by the experience of Grand County, located on the west side of the Continental Divide, in connection with two water diversion projects involving some east slope communities and interests that possess rights to water that originates in and flows through Grand County.

Both of these projects have important implications for communities and activities in the county, so I joined with the county in requesting ''cooperating agency'' status to the County for both of these projects.

However, due to the discretionary nature of granting such status, in one case the County status was granted, in another it was denied.

One of these projects is the Moffat Collection System Project. The Denver Water Department owns and collects water in various streams that flow west from the flanks of the Continental Divide. The Department then pipes this water through a water tunnel associated with the Moffat Tunnel, which is also a railroad tunnel.

In 2004, the Denver Water Department began an effort to increase the volume of water it collects and sends through this Moffat Collection System. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the lead agency on this project and began the necessary NEP A work. And when Grand County requested ''cooperating agency'' status for this project, the Corps denied their request.

The other project is called the Windy Gap Firming Project. This project also diverts water from Grand County to the eastern slope. The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District is the prime beneficiary of the water from this project, which is designed to increase the water collection and diversion from Grand County using features such as Lake Granby, Shadow Mountain Reservoir, Grand Lake, and the Alva diversion tunnel.

In this case, the lead Federal agency conducting the NEPA work on this project was the Bureau of Reclamation. Again, Grand County sought ''cooperating agency'' status—and in this case, the Bureau of Reclamation granted the County that status.

This bill responds to this discrepancy by removing the discretion of either the Corps of Engineers or the Bureau of Reclamation to deny a request for ''cooperating agency'' status by a county or other local government having jurisdiction over any portion of such a project.

In other words, under the bill if a county or other similar subdivision of a state requests ''cooperating agency'' status regarding a transbasin-diversion water project located within its jurisdiction, the Corps or Bureau, if acting as the lead agency under NEPA, would be required to grant that request.

I believe that it is important for counties and other subdivisions to be involved in the important issues affecting them, such as transbasin water diversion projects. I do not believe that allowing them more direct involvement in these issues should be up to the will of the lead Federal agency if they have made a decision to seek such status.

IN RECOGNITION OF STAFF SERGEANT MICHAEL LEE RUOFF, JR.

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of SSG Michael Lee Ruoff Jr., passed away on July 1, 2007, in Ta'meem, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Michael's wife, Tracy, and two daughters, Danielle and Grace were residing in Schweinfurt, Germany, where Michael's unit was stationed, and had planned to return to their home in Cañon City when Michael returned from the war. Cañon City is also the home of his parents, Mike and Vickie Ruoff.

Born in Ukiah, CA, Michael joined the Army at the age of 18, right out of high school, and was stationed at Fort Carson.

During his 13 years in the Army, Ruoff served in posts around the world as a crew member on M1 Abrams tanks. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, in Schweinfurt, Germany.

SSG Michael Ruoff's father was a Vietnam veteran, and like his father, Michael was a remarkable soldier, who could always be counted on.

Michael was a devoted man with deep beliefs, who, on July 1, 2007, made the most selfless sacrifice by giving his life to uphold the American ideals of freedom and democracy.

I present my humble gratitude to SSG Michael Lee Ruoff for his service to our country and offer my deepest heartfelt condolences to his family.

IMPROVING FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE TO DEFEND THE NATION AND THE CONSTITUTION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I have reservations about this bill, but I will vote for It today.

It has just been introduced, and we have had only a short time to review it. And those of us who do not serve on the Intelligence Committee have had to depend on news reports and the debate on the floor for information regarding the events that have led to its being considered today.

We have been informed that Admiral McConnell, Director of National Intelligence, has asserted that under current law there is a critical collection gap in our electronic surveillance capabilities, and that the administration