

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2014

Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
2362-B Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

We write to thank you for your ongoing support of long-term sustainability and cost-effective solutions to combat severe drought and water needs of the Colorado River and the American West. The WaterSMART Grants Program and the Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program have been well received in our communities and have gone a long way towards building a more resilient, self-sufficient and drought-tolerant economy in seventeen western states. **Specifically, we recommend that funding levels for these programs be increased to \$152 million, an additional \$100 million above the President's budget of \$52 million for WaterSMART of which \$21.5 million is for Title XVI.**

Due to emergency drought one way to alleviate the current constraints of securing Title XVI funding is to include the following paragraph in the Statement of Managers, in the section within the Bureau of Reclamation entitled "Water and Related Resources."

WaterSmart Program, Water Reclamation/Reuse Projects – The Committee believes there is an opportunity to enhance the program's effectiveness through the funding of merit based water reclamation/reuse projects without requiring prior congressional authorization of those projects. Accordingly, the Committee directs the Bureau of Reclamation when announcing water reclamation and reuse program funding opportunities to specify that "The Bureau of Reclamation is inviting sponsors of water reclamation/reuse projects to request cost-shared funding for the planning, design or construction of those projects."

The above suggested language deletes "congressionally authorized Title XVI." The ultimate funding award decisions would still remain with the Bureau. This approach simply opens the door to projects that are caught up in the challenges/ politics of the congressional legislative process. Based on a recent national survey of recycled water projects, for California alone, this change would open much needed funding opportunities given the State's water needs and projected recycled water initiatives. **This change would be limited to FY15 only.**

Title XVI, Water Reclamation and Reuse Program

Title XVI of P.L. 102-575 provides authority for Reclamation's water recycling and reuse program. Through Title XVI, Reclamation identifies opportunities to reclaim and reuse municipal, industrial and agricultural wastewater and naturally impaired ground and surface water. Title XVI provides funding for planning studies and the construction of water recycling projects, on a project specific

basis, in partnership with local governmental entities. Reclaimed water can support a variety of purposes, such as, groundwater recharge, industrial use, irrigation, power generation and environmental restoration.

Unfortunately, there continues to be a \$350 million backlog for "active" congressionally authorized water reuse and reclamation projects. These projects are located across the West, and if additional funding were made available, we could prepare for eventual drought cycles and quicker delivery of much-needed water. Not only do these projects create jobs, boost our local economies, farms and businesses, but they provide for long term savings. They represent a sound and critical investment in solutions to our water challenges and water sustainability while addressing our drought concerns. We recommend funding for the Title XVI program be increased to \$75 million for FY15.

WaterSMART Grants Program

WaterSMART helps to implement the SECURE Water Act, a law that authorizes water and science agencies to work together with state and local water managers to plan for climate change and other threats to water supplies. In 2011, Reclamation Basin Study report, Reclamation found that the Colorado River Basin may face 5–6 °F increase in temperature over the 21st century, with slightly larger increases projected in the upper Colorado Basin. Precipitation is projected to increase by 2.1% in the upper basin while declining by 1.6% in the lower basin by 2050, and mean annual runoff is projected to decrease by 8.5% by 2050.

WaterSMART allows all bureaus of the Department of Interior to work with Tribes, States, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to pursue a sustainable water supply for the nation by establishing a framework to coordinate water conservation activities. WaterSMART provides cost-shared funding for Water and Energy Efficiency Grants; System Optimization Review Grants; Advanced Water Treatment and Pilot and Demonstration Projects and Grants to Develop Climate Analysis Tools. These funding opportunities promote the projects critical to addressing the potential supply and demand imbalances faced in the Colorado River Basin and across the West, and help resource managers save significant amounts of water. **Completed WaterSMART projects are saving an estimated 616,000 acre-feet per year; enough water for more than 2.4 million people. WaterSMART grants leverage non-federal investment at greater than a 2:1 ratio.** We recommend increasing funding for the WaterSMART program; which includes the grants, basin studies, and Cooperative Watershed Management activities.

Tens of millions of people rely on these programs to further drought proof our drinking water, irrigation, and recreation water supplies. With 50 percent of the country in drought, and demands for water increasing, water conservation and efficiencies are required at the very minimum. Thank you for your consideration in funding these programs.

Sincerely,


Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress


George Miller
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Jim Costa

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva

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