

ANITA WINKLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OREGON WATER RESOURCES CONGRESS
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I am Anita Winkler, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress. This testimony is submitted to the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies, regarding the FY2011 Budget for the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) was established in 1912 as a trade association to support member needs to protect water rights and encourage conservation and water management statewide. OWRC represents non-potable agriculture water suppliers in Oregon, primarily irrigation districts, as well as other special districts and local governments that deliver irrigation water. The association represents the entities that operate water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower production.

RE: Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program (CWSRF) – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency FY 11 Request

Request

The Oregon Water Resources Congress is requesting \$5 billion in FY11 for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program (CWSRF). This request is roughly equivalent to the FY 09 obligations plus the ARRA obligations also in FY 09.

We acknowledge that the Administration's request for \$2 billion for the program is over twice the amount in its FY 09 budget, but it falls far short of the total amount for the program in FY 09 when combined with the ARRA funds. And the Administration's budget request for FY 11 is about 5% less than its budget for FY 10.

Several OWRC member districts have received loans from the CSWRF Program over the last several years. Four of our member districts received over \$11 million funding from the ARRA funding through the CWSRF Program for projects to convert open canals to piped canals which conserves water. Those districts' applications had been on the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) list of projects eligible for funding for many years and would probably still be on that list had the ARRA funding not been made available. We provide that comment not to complain, but to emphasize the need for additional funding for this program.

DEQ describes these district piping projects as "water efficiency projects (that) will significantly reduce the amount of water loss in their delivery systems and an estimated total of 54 cubic feet per second of water from these projects will be returned to nearby streams to improve water quality," in DEQ's "Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program Intended Use Plan - Update #1, State Fiscal Year 2010," issued March 1, 2010. Piping canals improves water quality by eliminating run-off into the canals and increases water availability for fish and irrigators by eliminating water loss from the canal system.

That same document recognizes that funding these four irrigation district projects meant DEQ exceeded the minimum ARRA requirement that 20% of the total ARRA funding for the CWSRF Program be used for “green” projects. (“Green” projects include water efficiency, energy efficiency, green infrastructure or environmentally innovative activities.) Additional information about the irrigation district projects and other projects funded in Oregon through the CWSRF Program can be found at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/loans/docs/IUP2010Update1.pdf>

While our comments are focused on the need of additional funding for the CWSRF Program in regards to our members’ needs, it is our understanding that the list of projects eligible for and needing this funding grows annually and exceed the Oregon DEQ’s funding capacity. This fund is critical to improving Oregon’s water quality providing a significant return on this Federal infrastructure investment.

We respectfully request the appropriation of at least \$5 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan fund for FY 2011.

Sincerely,

Anita Winkler
Executive Director