



Oregon Water Resources Congress

1201 Court St. NE, Suite 303 | Salem, OR 97301-4188 | 503-363-0121 | Fax: 503-371-4926 | www.owrc.org

ANITA WINKLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OREGON WATER RESOURCES CONGRESS
MARCH 19, 2010

I am Anita Winkler, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress. This testimony is submitted to the United States House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, regarding the Department of the Interior's FY11 Budget for the Bureau of Reclamation.

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.

Bureau of Reclamation

OWRC continues to support an increase in funding for the Bureau of Reclamation's Water and Related Resources program above the Administration's proposed FY11 Budget request for the Bureau of Reclamation's programs west-wide. We are disappointed that the Administration's budget proposal is less than the Enacted FY 10 budget, especially for the Water and Related Resources program at a time when there is broad consensus that the water supply for the West is inadequate to meet current diverse needs, aging infrastructure needs for rehabilitation or replacement, and the need for expanded water supply, (whether as a result of climate change, population increase in the West, or the increasing types of demand on the water supply), is increasing. Reclamation has been and must continue to be the leader for the West in meeting these needs but that requires a budget that reflects these increasing needs, not a budget that reduces the Bureau's ability to provide that level of leadership.

The Administration's current budget proposal is more than \$200 million less than what we in the water community feel is necessary to carryout an effective 21st Century water program for the West.

Water SMART Program Challenge Grants

OWRC has been a strong advocate of the Challenge Grant program that is now part of the WaterSMART Program. Oregon's districts have been successful recipients of these Challenge Grants, typically with a non-federal share exceeding the required amount. This program has supported our member districts' efforts to improve water delivery systems, conserve water, and implement innovative projects to meet the water

The mission of the Oregon Water Resources Congress is to promote the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water resources.

needs in our state. With a return of over \$5 for every \$1 of Federal investment, this program far exceeds the results of other partnerships between the Federal government and local project sponsors. As an example, prior years' Federal investment of \$3.6 million dollars in Oregon projects resulted in a total investment of over \$21 million dollars in water conservation projects and yielded a savings of over 539,000 acre-feet of water annually in Oregon.

The Oregon projects funded through Challenge Grants have led to significant amounts of water returned in-stream without reducing the amount of land to which the districts deliver water. These projects have been key to some of the districts' ability to work cooperatively with other parties in their respective river basins to address the in-stream needs and water quality needs of their basins and avoiding enforcement actions by the Federal or State governments.

We appreciate that the Challenge Grant program has been continued under the WaterSMART program and that the Administration has proposed an increase in the budget for this program of about 50%. We anticipate continued success with this program for our member districts to implement system improvements that benefit their respective water users and their communities.

Water Conservation Field Services Program

OWRC appreciates the proposed increase in Reclamation's FY 2011 budget request for Water Conservation Field Services over FY 2010. We do believe that this program remains underfunded, especially in light of Interior's focus on ensuring stable, secure water supplies for the Nation. The Water Conservation Field Service Program provides a key component to support irrigation districts and similar water delivery systems in their efforts to conserve water.

In the last two years the Water Conservation Field Services Program provided technical assistance to irrigation districts and awarded grants totaling over \$1.5 million to irrigation districts in Oregon. Those grants provided partial funding for pipe for used to pipe canals, canal linings, SCADA systems, GIS systems, and water conservation plans – all supporting water conservation program being implemented by these districts.

The planning projects and technical assistance funded under the Field Services program are often the planning work that helps our member districts identify opportunities for water conservation through improved water management and capital investments. The Federal share in these projects ensures that the districts are able to continue these planning efforts without which the projects discussed in the Challenge Grant Program above may not be implemented and the water not conserved. This program provides seed money for both short and long term planning by districts and water users that results in helping Oregon meet the competing demands for water in basins throughout the state. Without these projects, basin planning efforts become just that – plans sitting on shelves without the ability to implement them.

We request that this program be funded at 17 million dollars -- \$1 million for each Reclamation state.

Oregon Needs

Conservation Implementation

The largest need for funding for OWRC's members is to implement water conservation projects. Irrigation districts in Oregon continue to line and pipe existing open waterways to enhance both water supply and water quality. But the ability to continue this work depends on some public investment in return for the public benefits. Districts have conserved water and provided some of the saved or conserved water to benefit the fishery in-stream while also building reservoir supplies or reducing the amount of water needed to meet their water users water needs.

Districts are often the largest water supplier in a basin. When they are able to conserve water, that conserved water can be used by other irrigators, to restore in-stream flows to help protect endangered species, or for other uses in the basin.

Oregon districts hope to continue this work through enhanced water conservation and improved water management, but to do that the districts need support to implement effective alternative programs such as pilot water banking projects, energy reduction programs, additional measurement and telemetry monitoring, etc.

While funding for project implementation and construction is primary, our member districts also need funding assistance for the design and engineering of these projects. Many have reached a point at which the lack of funding for the non-construction phase of projects is becoming and will continue to be an impediment to the districts' ability to move forward with water conservation projects.

While some of these districts will continue to benefit from the funding requested in the FY11 budget, others are going through a reauthorization process or new authorizations for projects in their districts that will continue this conservation ethic.

Deschutes Basin

Deschutes Basin Board of Control

Deschutes Basin Board of Control, comprised of seven irrigation districts (Arnold, Central Oregon, North Unit, Swalley, Three Sisters, and Tumalo), is requesting \$5,000,000 for cost-share planning, design, and construction of water conservation projects, including piping, as part of the Deschutes Project. These projects will increase water conservation, reduce consumption of electricity, and increase instream flows for threatened and endangered species in the Deschutes Basin.

Tumalo Irrigation District

Tumalo Irrigation District is requesting \$4,000,000 to pipe 6 miles of existing open canal to increase water conservation. Piping the canal will also lead to reduced energy demands, improved water quality, and increased instream flows for fish and wildlife in the Deschutes Basin.

Willamette Basin

Clean Water Services/Tualatin Valley Irrigation District

Clean Water Services, with Tualatin Valley Irrigation District as one of its partners, is requesting \$1,440,000 to complete a Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement and planning report examining two alternatives for the Tualatin Basin Water Supply Project. This project is essential to meet the growing municipal, agricultural, industrial, and environmental water supply needs of the region that depend on a long-term reliable water source.

Greenberry Irrigation District

Greenberry Irrigation District is requesting \$972,000 to construct and install pipeline and a pumping station as part of district infrastructure development that will improve delivery efficiency and increase water conservation. These improvements will also lead to increased instream flows for fish and wildlife in the Willamette Basin.

Klamath Basin

The Klamath Project districts continue to require support for their efforts to provide certainty for water delivery including the basin-wide recovery plan, the studies to increase water storage capacity, their Water Conservation Implementation work, the Klamath Dam Removal Study and other work related to the recently signed settlement agreements, other ongoing operations planning and other projects within Reclamation's budget for the Mid-Pacific Division. We continue to encourage the Administration and in particular, the various Department of the Interior Agencies, to work closely with the districts in the project area on the overall funding and planning necessary for ongoing solutions and the implementation of those solutions to ensure reliable delivery of water for irrigators while addressing other water needs in the basin.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the FY11 Federal budget. While we support existing proposals, we feel that given recent record-setting droughts in the west and in Oregon in particular and what appears will be a severe drought year in Oregon this year, we need to support an increased budget to stabilize the nation's water supply for the many needs it must meet. Providing a stable water supply feeds the economy locally and at the national level.

Sincerely,

Anita Winkler
Executive Director