

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Chair, Committee on Natural Resources  
United States House of Representatives  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources  
United States House of Representative  
1324 Dirksen House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

As your committee and the Congress considers infrastructure legislation, we point to the overwhelmingly dry conditions the West is facing and urge you to take action to address the shortcomings of our aging Western agricultural, municipal, industrial and rural water infrastructure.

We collectively represent thousands of Western farmers, ranchers, water providers, businesses and communities who help provide \$120 billion of agricultural production and many of the local and regional public water agencies that supply water to over 75 million Western urban, suburban and rural residents.

While we support ongoing efforts to increase funding for clean drinking water, wastewater, and related programs, there is an acute and critical need for water supply infrastructure in the Western United States that must not be overlooked. Our organizations know, through the work we do every day, that federal investment in a diversified water management portfolio that serves a broad range of water uses is essential. Such a portfolio **MUST** be included as essential infrastructure in the next legislative package.

Hydrological conditions in the West are continuing to change and populations are continuing to expand, raising serious questions about the viability of our nation's water infrastructure. The impact from our failure to address aging water infrastructure, as well as investing in new infrastructure, has become increasingly acute. We believe a visionary federal infrastructure package should seek to bolster our aging water infrastructure and keep water flowing to our nation's farms and ranches, while at the same time improving supply reliability for cities and the environment.

This funding will assist in addressing critical safety needs, develop new infrastructure, invest in smart water technology and conservation, and improve forest and water ecosystems. Additionally, it will spur economic recovery and prepare us to meet the water needs of the next generation in the face of a changing climate.

Our organizations collectively believe that federal investment in water conservation, water recycling, watershed management, conveyance, desalination, water transfers, groundwater storage, and surface storage is urgently needed for a comprehensive water management portfolio. Based on a survey of our members and review of publicly available federal agency and related data, we have identified a **ten-year water infrastructure and related needs investment of approximately \$49 billion dollars**. As detailed in the accompanying [document](#), this includes \$2.8 billion for Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) storage and conveyance, \$3.8 billion to repair of existing infrastructure and address dam safety, and \$2 billion to accelerate completion of rural water, water smart technologies, water recycling and reuse, and other authorized projects. Additionally, over half of identified needs are for natural infrastructure, including \$30 billion for forest restoration and \$1 billion for BOR ecosystem restoration work.

In addition to the funding needs for specific federal programs that have been assembled using public statements, reports and other data from federal agencies, Western water users and state officials involved in our coalition have also developed an inventory of water supply projects in need of federal assistance. To date, the total costs are well over **\$60 billion**, and while not all of those costs would, or should, be funded by the federal government, this list illustrates the massive need for water infrastructure by states.

Finally, in addition to financial resources, in order to ensure funding of the magnitude meets on-the-ground needs within the timeframe that President Biden envisions, and to avoid the pitfalls of the past, we urge Congress to consider, among others, the following broad reforms:

- Improve the efficiency of permitting processes for water infrastructure development. Commonsense process improvements were included in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* and can be used as a model for success, as well as others, to ensure timely construction of projects. The *American Jobs Plan* provides that “the President’s plan will use smart, coordinated infrastructure permitting to expedite federal decisions while prioritizing stakeholder engagement, community consultation, and maximizing equity, health, and environmental benefits.”
- Congress should direct federal agencies to implement a more cooperative approach toward achieving multiple goals under existing environmental laws and regulations. And, where such approaches are currently in law, Congress should encourage these agencies to use any and all flexibilities under the law to act with the urgency and promptness that this crisis demands.
- Congress should closely review, revise, and reform, as appropriate, the funding disbursement processes, as well as the procurement and grant making practices of federal water agencies to ensure costs for overhead and unnecessary project features are minimized or eliminated. In our experience with water projects, expenditures on these items can become significant and impact on-the-ground progress.
- Congress should reauthorize and clarify existing authorities, as necessary, to ensure important federal assistance does not expire or exclude critical western water projects. This includes extending the BOR storage and water reuse programs and ensuring EPA can use its Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program to assist

federal water contractors. In order to maximize economic activity, we also encourage Congress to designate funding for BOR projects as non-reimbursable.”

We need your help to ensure that federal investment and timely improvements are made to our water management portfolio. We look forward to working with you to address our economy’s diverse water infrastructure needs.

Sincerely,

A&B Irrigation District (ID)	California Seed Association
Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona	California State Beekeepers Association
Alaska Farm Bureau	California State Floral Association
Almond Alliance of California	California Walnut Commission
American AgCredit	California Warehouse Association
American Agri-Women	California Water Alliance
American Farm Bureau Federation	California Water Service
American Farmland Trust	California Women for Agriculture
American Olive Oil Producers Association	Carlsbad Irrigation District (NM)
Animas-La Plata	Central California Irrigation District
Water Conservancy District (CO)	Central Arizona Irrigation & Drainage District
Arnold Irrigation District (OR)	Central Oregon Irrigation District
Arizona Cattle Feeders Association	Central Nebraska
Arizona Cotton Growers Association	Public Power & Irrigation District
Arizona Farm and Ranch Group	Central Utah Water Conservancy District
Arizona Farm Bureau	Central Valley Project Water Association (CA)
Association of California Water Agencies	Charleston Drainage District (CA)
Associated Ditches of Kansas	City of Shasta Lake (CA)
Biggs-West Gridley Water District (CA)	CoBank
Black Canyon Irrigation District (ID)	Colorado Farm Bureau
Boise-Kuna Irrigation District (ID)	Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Assoc.
Browns Valley Irrigation District (CA)	Colorado Potato Administrative Committee
Butte Water District (CA)	Colorado River
California Agricultural Irrigation Association	Energy Distributors Association
California Alfalfa & Forage Association	Colorado River District (CO)
California Apple Commission	Colorado Water Congress
California Association of Wheat Growers	Columbia Basin Development League (WA)
California Avocado Commission	Columbia Canal Company (CA)
California Bean Shippers Association	Del Puerto Water District (CA)
California Blueberry Association	Deschutes Basin Board of Control (OR)
California Blueberry Commission	Dolores Water Conservancy District (CO)
California Cattlemen’s Association	Dunnigan Water District (CA)
California Citrus Mutual	Eagle Field Water District (CA)
California Cotton Alliance	East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (WA)
California Cotton Ginners & Growers Assoc.	Eastern Municipal Water District (CA)
California Farm Bureau	Electrical District #3 of Pinal County (AZ)
California Fresh Fruit Association	Electrical District #8 (AZ)
California Grain & Feed Association	Elephant Butte Irrigation District (NM)

Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (CA)  
 Family Farm Alliance  
 Family Water Alliance (CA)  
 Farm Credit Council  
 Farmers Conservation Alliance (OR)  
 Farwell Irrigation District (NE)  
 Far West Equipment Dealers Association  
 Food Northwest (ID,OR,WA)  
 Fremont-Madison Irrigation District (ID)  
 Fresno Madera Farm Credit, ACA (CA)  
 Friant Water Authority (CA)  
 Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (ND)  
 Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District (CA)  
 Groundwater Management Districts Association  
 Grower-Shipper Association of  
     Santa Barbara & San Obispo Counties (CA)  
 Hawaii Farm Bureau  
 Idaho Dairymen's Association  
 Idaho Farm Bureau  
 Idaho Potato Commission  
 Idaho Water Resources Research Institute  
 Idaho Water Users Association  
 Imperial Irrigation District (CA)  
 Imperial Valley Vegetable Growers Assoc. (CA)  
 Irrigation & Electrical Districts Association  
     of Arizona  
 Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District  
 Kansas Water Congress  
 King Hill Irrigation District (ID)  
 Kings River Conservation District (CA)  
 Kittitas County Farm Bureau (WA)  
 Kittitas Reclamation District. (WA)  
 Kittitas County  
     Timothy Hay Growers & Suppliers (WA)  
 Klamath Drainage District (OR)  
 Klamath Irrigation District (OR)  
 Klamath Water Users Association (OR)  
 Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District (CA)  
 Little Snake River Conservation District (WY)  
 Little Snake River  
     Water Conservancy District (WY)  
 Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation  
     & Drainage District (AZ)  
 McKinleyville Community Services Dist. (CA)  
 McMullen Valley  
     Water Conservation & Drainage District (AZ)  
 Mercy Springs Water District (CA)  
 Meridian Farms Water Company (CA)  
 Modesto Irrigation District (CA)  
 Montana Farm Bureau  
 Montana Water Resources Association  
 Monterey One Water (CA)  
 Monterey Peninsula  
     Water Management District (CA)  
 National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
 Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District (ID)  
 National Onion Association  
 National Pecan Federation  
 National Water Resources Association  
 Natomas Mutual Water Company (CA)  
 Nebraska Farm Bureau  
 Nevada Farm Bureau Federation  
 Nevada Irrigation District (CA)  
 New Magma Irrigation & Drainage District (AZ)  
 New Mexico Chile Association  
 New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau  
 Niobrara Conservation District (WY)  
 North Dakota Water Users Association  
 Northeast Oregon Water Association  
 Northern California Water Association  
 Northern Water (CO)  
 North Side Canal Company (ID)  
 North Unit Irrigation District (OR)  
 Ochoco Irrigation District (OR)  
 Olive Growers Council of California  
 Orange Cove Irrigation District (CA)  
 Oregon Association of Nurseries  
 Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
 Oregon Dairy Farmers Association  
 Oregon Farm Bureau Federation  
 Oregon Potato Commission  
 Oregon Water Resources Congress  
 Oregon Women for Agriculture  
 Orland Unit Water Users Association (CA)  
 Pacific Egg and Poultry Association  
 Panoche Drainage District (CA)  
 Panoche Water District (CA)  
 Patterson Irrigation District (CA)  
 Pioneer Irrigation District (ID)  
 Portneuf Irrigating Company (ID)  
 Pot Hook Water Conservancy District (CO)  
 Princeton-Codora-Glenn Irrig. District (CA)  
 Provident Irrigation District (CA)  
 Public Lands Council  
 Queen Creek Irrigation District (AZ)  
 Quincy-Columbia Basin I.D. (WA)

Reclamation District No. 108 (CA)  
 Reclamation District 1500 (CA)  
 Richvale Irrigation District (CA)  
 River Garden Farms (CA)  
 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
 Roosevelt Irrigation District (AZ)  
 Roza Irrigation District (WA)  
 Roza-Sunnyside Board of Joint Control (WA)  
 Rubicon Water (facilities in CA and CO)  
 Sacramento River Settlement Contractors  
 Corporation (CA)  
 San Carlos Irrigation & Drainage District (AZ)  
 San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors  
 Water Authority (CA)  
 San Juan Water District (CA)  
 San Luis Canal Company (CA)  
 San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority(CA)  
 Salt River Project (AZ)  
 Sargent Irrigation District (NE)  
 Santa Margarita Water District (CA)  
 Solano Irrigation District (CA)  
 Solutions from the Land  
 South Columbia Basin Irrigation District (WA)  
 Southeastern Colorado  
 Water Conservancy District  
 Southwestern Water Conservation District (CO)  
 Southwest Kansas  
 Groundwater Management District No. 3  
 South Valley Water Association (CA)  
 South Yuba Water District (CA)  
 Sunnyside Division Board of Control (WA)  
 Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District (WA)  
 Sutter Extension Water District (CA)  
 Sutter Mutual Water Company (CA)  
 Swalley Irrigation District (OR)  
 Tehama Colusa Canal Authority (CA)  
 Three Sisters Irrigation District (OR)  
 Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (NV)  
 Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District (CA)  
 Tulelake Irrigation District (CA)  
 Tumalo Irrigation District (OR)  
 Turlock Irrigation District (CA)  
 United Potato Growers of America  
 United Water Conservation District (CA)  
 Utah Farm Bureau  
 Utah Water Users Association  
 Ventura County Agricultural Association (CA)  
 Washington Farm Bureau  
 Washington State Potato Commission  
 Washington State  
 Water Resources Association  
 WaterReuse Association  
 Weber Basin Water Conservancy District (UT)  
 Wellton-Mohawk  
 Irrigation and Drainage District (AZ)  
 Western Agricultural Processors Association  
 Western Canal Water District (CA)  
 Western Growers Association  
 Western Urban Water Coalition  
 Wyoming Farm Bureau  
 Yakima Basin Joint Board (WA)  
 Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District (WA)  
 Yosemite Farm Credit (CA)  
 Yuba Water Agency (CA)  
 Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association (AZ)