



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Washington, DC 20240



IN REPLY REFER TO:

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

Distribution through:

Ron Burke
President and CEO
Alliance for Water Efficiency
33 North LaSalle, Suite 2275
Chicago, IL 60602
Ron@a4we.org

Dear Partners:

Thank you for your coalition letter of September 1, 2022, addressed to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and myself. We share your resolve as to the urgency of western drought as exacerbated by climate change, as well as the promise offered by the tools and resources Congress has enacted to help address it.

Your comments on approaching drought spending by prioritizing strategies that will create sustained, cost-effective reductions in consumptive water use demand are appreciated and shared by Reclamation. We have an immediate challenge on the Colorado River, as you noted, which demands collaboration and the rapid deployment of effective operational and programmatic responses. At the same time, we recognize that long-term structural imbalances between supply and demand, on the Colorado and in other river basins, is a growing challenge across the western states. We agree that all water users – agriculture, municipal and industrial – must go ‘all in’ on conservation and water efficiency to combat drought and climate change.

The historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make transformational progress happen, and we have once-in-a-generation challenges that the BIL and IRA will help us surmount. We are executing both the BIL and the IRA with that perspective in mind. Through the BIL, Reclamation allocated more than \$2.5 billion to date with a focus on preparedness and resiliency, inclusive of a \$125 Million investment through WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants to improve water use efficiency and conservation.

In addition, on October 12, 2022, the Department of the Interior (Department) announced the New Lower Colorado River Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program funded through the IRA. Two of its three components focused on short-term system conservation and were open for proposal submissions until November 21, 2022. With a similar program implemented in the Upper Colorado Basin in coordination with the Upper Colorado River Commissioner. The third component of the

Lower Colorado Basin program allows for proposals to be submitted by July 19 for long-term system efficiency improvements that will result in multi-year system conservation. A similar program for the Upper Basin will be announced following the conclusion of the current request for input to be submitted by July 07, 2023. The Department anticipates investing the majority of the IRA funding allocated to the Colorado River in this long-term component to help bridge the supply and demand imbalance in the Colorado River Basin.

Thank you for your coalition letter, and for sharing your views on the importance of investing in strategies to reduce consumptive water demand and address both the immediate and long-term water crisis in the west. We agree with you that cost-effective reductions in consumptive water use demand, particularly water efficiency, will be key. As we move forward, Reclamation and the Department will stay actively engaged with you on your ideas and the opportunities to collaborate to promote participation in the different investment programs that are and will be available in the near future.

Your continued collaboration to promote participation in our drought mitigation programs in the Colorado River Basin and across the West will be critical to our success.

Please contact me or Michael Brain at mbrain@usbr.gov or (202) 513-0583 if we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by
MARIACAMILLE TOUTON
Date: 2023.06.28 10:36:18
-04'00'

Camille Calimlim Touton
Commissioner

Distribution to:

Alliance for Water
Efficiency Chicago, IL

Appliance Standards Awareness Project
Boston, MA

Arizona Municipal Water Users Association
Phoenix, AZ

Bottom Line Utility Solutions, Inc.
Laguna Hills, CA

City of Bend
Bend, OR

American Council for an Energy Efficient
Economy
Washington, DC

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Los Angeles, CA
Municipal Water District of Orange County

Fountain Valley, CA

Rancho Water
Temecula, CA

San Luis Obispo
City of San Luis Obispo, CA

U.S. Green Building Council
Washington, DC

Utah State University Center for Water Efficient
Landscaping
Logan, UT

Water Now Alliance
San Francisco, CA

Watershed, LLC
Vashon, WA



September 1, 2022

Deb Haaland
U.S. Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Camille Calimlim Touton
Commissioner, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Drought and Water Efficiency Spending

Dear Secretary Haaland and Commissioner Calimlim Touton:

As you know, climate change is shrinking water supplies across much of the U.S., particularly in the west where a 23-year drought has created an emergency situation in the Colorado River Basin, with

Reclamation working with states to rapidly reduce consumptive water use demand. Climate change is also contributing to more frequent and severe seasonal droughts beyond the western U.S., with more than 40 states experiencing drought during 2022.

The undersigned organizations are pleased that Congress has approved new funding in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* and the *Inflation Reduction Act* that can help water and wastewater systems adapt to and mitigate climate change. With relatively little funding available compared to the need, we urge Reclamation to prioritize its spending on strategies that will create sustained, cost-effective reductions in consumptive water use demand, particularly water efficiency.

Strategies like efficient plumbing fixtures and agriculture irrigation technologies, repairing and rehabbing leaks in water transmission and distribution systems and in buildings, replacing water intensive landscapes with water efficient options, and water reuse can typically reduce consumptive water demand more quickly and cost-effectively than supply-side strategies can deliver an equivalent amount of additional water. Moreover, these water efficiency strategies can create sustained water savings, unlike measures such as temporarily fallowing crops.

Water efficiency also mitigates climate change by reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions associated with heating, pumping and treating water/wastewater, which accounts for nearly two percent of electricity use in the U.S., according to the Electric Power Research Institute. [A University of California Davis study](#) found that water efficiency projects reduced energy use in California more than traditional energy efficiency measures and did so more cost-effectively.

Other water efficiency benefits include lowering family water bills hundreds of dollars annually on average, according to the USEPA; making more water available to support healthy stream flows and lake levels for plants and animals; and limiting surface water contamination from fertilizers and pesticides running off streets, yards, and farm fields.

We encourage Reclamation to prioritize rapid implementation of proven water efficiency strategies to reduce consumptive water demand and address both the immediate and long-term water crisis in the west.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Water Efficiency
Chicago, IL

Appliance Standards Awareness Project
Boston, MA

Arizona Municipal Water Users Association
Phoenix, AZ

Bottom Line Utility Solutions, Inc.
Laguna Hills, CA

City of Bend
Bend, OR

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Sonoma Water
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U.S. Water Alliance
Oakland, CA

Valley Soil
Temecula, CA

Waterless Co.
Vista, CA

Western Resources Advocates
Boulder, CO

EcoSystems, LLC
Miami, FL

Georgia Water Wise Council
Marietta, GA

International Association of Plumbing and
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Municipal Water District of Orange County
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Rancho Water
Temecula, CA

San Luis Obispo, City of
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U.S. Green Building Council
Washington, DC

Utah State University Center for Water Efficient
Landscaping
Logan, UT

Water Now Alliance
San Francisco, CA

Watershed, LLC
Vashon, WA

cc:

Governor Cox
Governor Ducey
Governor Gordon
Governor Lujan Grisham
Governor Newsom
Governor Polis
Governor Sisolak