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 NW
Washington DC 20240-0001

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

American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy

Appliance Standards Awareness Project

Arizona Municipal Water Users Association

Athens-Clarke County Water Conservation, GA

Bottom Line Utility Solutions, Inc.

California Water Efficiency Partnership

Dickinson Associates

EcoSystems, LLC

Foothill Municipal water District (CA)

Georgia Water Wise Council

Green Builder Coalition

International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO)

International Code Council

Las Cruces, City of

LIXIL

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Municipal Water District of Orange County

Plumbing Manufacturers International

Round Rock, City of

Sonoma Water

U.S. Green Building Council

U.S. Water Alliance

Utah State University Center for Water Efficient Landscaping

Waterless Co.

Water Now Alliance

Watershed, LLC

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