



## **WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL**

*682 East Vine Street, Suite 7 / Murray, Utah 84107 / (801) 685-2555 / FAX (801) 685-2559*

*Web Page: [www.westernstateswater.org](http://www.westernstateswater.org)*

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
The Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-307 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Vice Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
The Capitol, S-146A  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs, Vice Chair, and Ranking Member,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Western States Water Council (WSWC) to support the inclusion of \$15 million in Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations legislation to support the standing up at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the Water Data Sharing Pilot Program authorized under Section 50213 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and included in President Biden's FY23 EPA budget request.

WSWC is a bi-partisan government entity created by Western Governors in 1965 that represents eighteen states. Our members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of their respective Governors, advising them on water policy issues. Our mission is to ensure that the West has an adequate, secure, and sustainable supply of water of suitable quality to meet its diverse economic and environmental needs now and in the future.

Centralized water data sharing mechanisms are one of the key fundamental building blocks for successful water policy, security, resilience, sustainability, and management outcomes. Although large volumes of federal, state, and local data are publicly available, very little of it is standardized or easily sharable. Accurate and timely water data gathered by various government agencies are critical for sound decision making, but accessing existing data takes up valuable time and resources, and often requires re-formatting files to meet various federal, state, and local needs. As noted in IIJA §50213(a)(2), recent data principles and standards have emerged through the Internet of Water, developed by the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, to ensure that data shared is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR). Adjusting data to meet these standards in order to create a standardized, nationwide system will require support at all levels of government and from various stakeholders.

The water data sharing program authorized under IJA §50213 includes grant funding of \$75 million over the next five years, administered through the EPA. The President's FY23 Budget includes an initial request for \$15 million for the program. Funding the authorized program would initiate state-based water sharing pilot programs that are focused on clean water objectives to protect communities and the environment. This is particularly important in the West where water quality is heavily impacted by limited water resources and drought.

As noted in our Vision on Water, "All levels of government must prioritize the collection, analysis and open sharing of reliable data regarding water availability, quality, and usage given its importance to research for sound science and data driven decision making." These pilot projects would serve as an important step toward establishing a larger, nationwide system for sharing water data.

We appreciate your consideration and hope you will support the EPA pilot project funding.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Verleger  
Chairwoman  
Western States Water Council



Jon Niermann  
Vice Chair  
Western States Water Council