



Western States Water

Addressing Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future

682 East Vine Street / Suite 7 / Murray, UT 84107 / (801) 685-2555 / Fax 685-2559 / www.westernstateswater.org

Chair - Jennifer Verleger; Executive Director - Tony Willardson; Editor - Michelle Bushman; Subscriptions - Julie Groat

WESTERN GOVERNORS

Elections

Following the elections, with fourteen of the eighteen WSWC member states voting in governors' races, Democrats hold eight statehouses and Republicans ten. Alaska (R), Arizona (D), California (D), Colorado (D), Idaho (R), Kansas (D), Montana (R), Nebraska (R), Nevada (D), New Mexico (D), North Dakota (R), Oklahoma (R), Oregon (D), South Dakota (R), Texas (R), Utah (R), Washington (D) and Wyoming (R).

Arizona Democrat Katie Hobbs won the statehouse by a very narrow margin (.68%), over Kari Lake, wresting control from Republicans. Lake has yet to concede. Nevada Governor Pete Siskolak (D) was the only western state incumbent governor defeated, by a narrow margin (1.39%), by Republican Joe Lombardo. In North Dakota, Utah and Wyoming, governors' races are in 2024 (See WSW #2530).

CONGRESS

House

With Republican control of the House, there will be new leadership, including new committee leadership. Currently, the following Committee Ranking Minority Members are likely choices to chair committees:

Agriculture – Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (PA-15) a therapist, rehabilitation services manager, licensed nursing home administrator, and Boy Scout Council executive for some 30 years was first elected in 2008.

Appropriations – Rep. Kay Granger (TX-12) has been the senior minority member since 2019 and is a former teacher, businesswoman, and mayor of Fort Worth.

Budget – Rep. Jason Smith (MO-8) is a seventh-generation Missourian, family farmer, agricultural economist, businessman, lawyer and state legislator elected to the U.S. House in 2013 in a special election.

Energy and Commerce - Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers (WA-5) grew up working on her family's orchard

and fruit stand in Eastern Washington, and is a wife and mother of three, first elected in 2004, she chaired the House Republican Conference from 2012 to 2018.

Natural Resources – Rep. Bruce Westerman (AR-4) is an agricultural engineer and forester first elected in 2014, he now serves on the Minority Whip Team, and Rep. Louie Gohmert (TX-1) serves as the Vice Ranking Member.

Rules – Rep. Tom Cole (OK-4) is a fifth-generation Oklahoman and an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation, first elected in 2002, he is a former college instructor of history and politics, he founded a political consulting and survey research firm (Cole is also the Vice Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee).

Science – Rep. Frank Lucas (OK-3), first elected in 1994, is another fifth-generation Oklahoman and agricultural engineer whose family has farmed there for over 120 years.

Transportation and Infrastructure – Rep. Sam Graves (MO-6) a small businessman and a sixth-generation family farmer was first elected in 2001.

Ways and Means – Rep. Kevin Brady (TX-8), prior to his election in 1997, he worked as a Chamber of Commerce executive for 18 years and served six years in the Texas House of Representatives, and in the House has served as Chairman of the Joint Committee on Taxation, and Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee of the House and Senate.

WATER QUALITY/WATER RESOURCES

Water Reuse/IIJA/Infrastructure Financing

On October 30 - November 3, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. State Department (Assistant Secretary of State and US Embassy), and WaterReuse Association led a delegation of over 40 water professionals from utilities, regulatory agencies, research institutions, and business exploring the State of Israel's water recycling program and projects. Other attendees included representatives of: the North American Development Bank; International Code Council; U.S. water and wastewater utilities; various

consultants; and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The delegation included Shellie Chard, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and other representatives from Texas and Maryland. Israel uses an integrated water resources management approach that includes water recycling, desalination, reclaimed municipal wastewater, and stormwater capture. Delegates toured facilities and met with representatives from research, monitoring, and data analysis programs as well as technology producers. A summary report to include lessons learned will be to aid water managers in the U.S. that are exploring water recycling strategies. For more details see, <https://watereuse.org/watereuse-leads-successful-delegation-to-israel/>.

On November 18, the WaterReuse Association marked the enactment last year of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and investment of \$1B over five years in water recycling programs for the Western United States and roughly \$48B for water programs across the Nation that can support water recycling projects. It also established an Interagency Working Group on Water Reuse. Over the past year, the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) awarded funds through the Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Grants Program and began standing up the newly created Competitive Grant Program for Large-Scale Water Recycling and Reuse Projects. USGS has awarded \$310M for 23 projects across California, Idaho, Texas, Utah, and Washington. The funding will assist drought-impacted communities with water supply resiliency projects. This initial round of funding included \$245M, out of a total of \$550M on from the IIJA, combined with \$65M in discretionary funding in the FY22 appropriations package.

Earlier this month, the USBR took its first steps in implementing the Large-Scale Water Recycling and Reuse Projects Program, releasing temporary guidance on the Feasibility Study Review Process. See <https://watereuse.org/watereuse-celebrates-one-year-of-the-bipartisan-infrastructure-package-and-water-reuse-funding/>.

ENVIRONMENT/WATER RESOURCES **Climate/Conference of Parties/Drought**

On November 7, at the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Egypt, 30 countries and 20 organizations came together to launch the International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA). No country is immune to drought and its impacts on food, water, and energy security, that are forcing migration and natural resource conflicts. Interested members of the Alliance see an urgent need to pivot from emergency response to increasing drought resilience through a more coordinated and effective strategy. EPA Administrator Michael

Regan spoke at the conference at an event titled “Water Reuse to Address Climate Challenges.”

MEETINGS/WEBINARS **IoW/Geoconnex User Webinar**

On December 6, at 2:30 pm (ET) the Internet of Water (IoW) Team at the Lincoln Center for Geospatial Solutions, will provide a detailed presentation and update for general audiences on the IoW’s flagship technology, Geoconnex. When completed, this geospatial index will be capable of searching and retrieving any water metadata published in the United States, and ultimately North America and beyond. Geoconnex relies on a distributed linked data system. Such systems are foundational elements of modern internet search technology, allowing for the search and retrieval of millions of records in an instant. Such a linked data system does not yet exist for water data, but has been an aspiration of the water data informatics community for some years, and the subject of significant research to date. This webinar will provide visualizations of Geoconnex (e.g., What does it do? How does it work?), including the current contents and anticipated growth in scope and scale of the index this year. For further information, including how to register, see: <https://internetofwater.org/events/geoconnex-a-community-index-for-water-data/>.

PEOPLE

Madline Franklin, Program Analyst, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), has been selected as the new WSWC and Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) Liaison. She will serve a two-year detail, beginning in January. She was a Presidential Management Fellow with USBR in 2016. Since that time, she has established USBR’s new water infrastructure Title Transfer Program, negotiated interagency agreements for infrastructure investments and improvements, led Reclamation’s Project Management Advisory Team, and gained experience working in asset management, budget formulation, and congressional affairs. In addition to her time with Reclamation, Madeline has worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Pennsylvania Women’s Agricultural Network. We congratulate Madline and look forward to working with her. She will replace **Heather Hofman** (USDA-National Water and Climate Center), as Liaison.

Former WSWC member **James H. Davenport** has written a book on Western Water Rights and the U.S. Supreme Court exploring the history behind the Prior Appropriations Doctrine and application of “first in time is first in right” applied across state lines in *Wyoming v. Colorado*. It can be found on Amazon.

The WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL is a government entity of representatives appointed by the Governors of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.