



Western States Water

Addressing Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future

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ADMINISTRATION/WATER RESOURCES

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/Bureau of Reclamation

On April 5, during a visit to the Imperial Dam, on the Colorado River, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Beaudreau, Sr. Advisor to the President and White House Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator Mitch Landrieu, and Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton announced a nearly \$585M Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) investment in 83 projects in eleven western states to improve water conveyance and storage, increase safety, improve hydro power generation and provide water treatment. Spending on Imperial Dam totals \$8.24M in Fiscal Year 2023.

“President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is making a historic investment to provide clean, reliable water to families, farmers and Tribes,” said Beaudreau. “As we work to address record drought and changing climate conditions throughout the West, these investments in our aging water infrastructure will conserve community water supplies and revitalize water delivery systems.”

“President Biden is investing in America, and today’s announcement delivering much needed repairs to aging dams and other water infrastructure is part of our whole-of-government approach to making communities more resilient to drought,” said Landrieu.

“These projects have been identified through a rigorous process and is a testament to the Bureau of Reclamation’s commitment to deliver water to future generations,” said Touton. “As we manage through changing climate, we must look to the safety of our projects to ensure that we can continue to provide clean, reliable water to communities, irrigators, and ecosystems across the West.”

The 83 projects selected for funding are designed to increase canal capacity, provide water treatment for Tribes, replace equipment for hydropower production and provide necessary maintenance to aging project buildings. Projects will be funded in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes \$8.3B for Reclamation water infrastructure projects over five years to advance drought resilience and repair aging water delivery systems, secure dams, complete rural water projects, and protect aquatic ecosystems. The Inflation Reduction Act is investing another \$4.6B. This announcement builds on \$240M in BIL spending in Fiscal Year 2022. The next application period for extraordinary maintenance funds is expected in October 2023.

CONGRESS/ENVIRONMENT

Weather Act/Public-Private Partnerships

On March 28, the House Science, Space and Technology Committee’s Environment Subcommittee held a hearing on Reauthorizing the Weather Act: Data and Innovation for Predictions. Subcommittee Chair Rep. Max Miller (R-OH) noted this was “the first in a series that touches on a very important topic: U.S. weather policy. As the Committee with sole jurisdiction over the National Weather Service and the scientific activities at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – or NOAA – we have the privilege of shaping the future of weather forecasts and modeling. This is a responsibility I do not take lightly. The stated mission of the National Weather Service is to provide services that protect life and property, as well as enhance the national economy.... In 2022 alone, there were 18 separate billion-dollar weather events that took the lives of 474 people and cost a total of \$165 billion in damage to infrastructure, homes, businesses, and more. In fact, a typical year in the U.S. sees 26,000 thunderstorms, 5,000 floods, and 1,300 tornadoes. That’s more extreme weather events than any other country.”

He continued, “Today’s hearing will focus primarily on one particular piece of the puzzle: the private sector and what they bring to the table for NOAA and the Weather Service. The data and innovation they offer can make immediate and impactful improvements to the status quo.... That is what I hope to take away from today’s hearing; how we in Congress can empower the weather enterprise to innovate and excel through public-private partnerships.” For further information on the hearing see: <https://science.house.gov/>.

Committee Chair Frank Lucas (R-OK) submitted an opening statement for the record: "Being a farmer, working with livestock, and living in tornado alley, the Science Committee's work on weather and climate is very important to me.... When I introduced the Weather Act in 2017, it was desperately needed because there hadn't been an update to weather policy in over two decades. But what I didn't know was the almost instant impact it would have in putting the United States back at the table when it comes to global leadership in forecasting. But while the Weather Act had an immediate positive impact, we still have work to do if we want to once again be the most accurate and trusted source of forecasting in the world. That's why as Chairman of the Committee, I am prioritizing the reauthorization of the Weather Act this Congress. Some of the programs will expire at the end of FY 23, while other programs will continue without any updates."

He added, "As we write new legislation, we plan to examine both categories – ensuring all of NOAA's work is modern, flexible, and at the forefront of accurate and timely weather modeling and forecasting. The impacts of weather are far too important to not strive for the very best. Protecting life and property, helping first responders anticipate extreme weather events, and ensuring that farmers and ranchers know when to plant crops are only a few of the reasons having the most accurate weather forecasts is invaluable. And we can only have accurate weather forecasts if we continue to invest in researching weather patterns and utilizing the tremendous innovation and data the private sector can offer.... Flash forward to this year, NOAA is going to invest \$27 million on either purchasing data or demonstrating its use in forecasts. That's quite the success story and a testament to the innovation of American businesses."

Invited witnesses included: Richard Jenkins, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Saildrone, Inc.; Meredith Bell, Atmospheric Program Manager, FLYHT Inc.; Dr. Antonio J. Busalacchi Jr., President, University Corporation for Atmospheric Research; and Michael Eilts, General Manager, Weather and Earth Intelligence, Spire Global (the latter submitted for the record).

MEETINGS

WestFAST/Pumped Storage Hydropower Systems

On April 12, at 10:00 am (MDT) the Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) will host a webinar on Permitting and Processes for New Pumped Storage Hydropower Systems. This event is one of several webinars exploring pumped storage hydropower. Presenters from various federal agencies and national labs will provide a high-level overview of the various permitting processes and issues involved in developing a new pumped storage hydropower project. Topics will

include the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing process, environmental issues and compliance requirements, Reclamation's lease of power privilege process, and findings from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory on steps to help navigate these different procedures. See: <https://westernstateswater.org/upcoming-westfast-webinars/>.

Western States Water Council - Spring Meetings

The WSWC Spring (201st) Meetings will be held in Reno, Nevada on May 22-24, at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino. A room block is being held in the name of the WSWC. The guest room rates for single/double occupancy is \$114.00 per night, plus tax. Our room block deadline is April 22. There is no registration fee to attend the meetings, but we are asking all individuals, regardless of in person or virtual attendance to please register in advance. For further information see <https://westernstateswater.org/events/2023-spring-201st-meetings/>.

Schedule of Meetings

Monday, May 22

1:00 pm Lemmon Valley & Truckee River Tour

Sponsor: Truckee Meadows Water Authority

Tuesday, May 23

8:00 am Host State Presentation

8:45 am Water Resources Committee Meeting

12:00 pm Executive Committee (over lunch)

1:30 pm Water Quality Committee Meeting

3:30 pm Legal Committee Meeting

6:00 pm Social Hour

Sponsor: SWCA Environmental Consultants

Wednesday, May 24

8:00 am WSWC Full Council Meeting

12:00 pm Pumped Storage Hydropower Workshop

PEOPLE

On April 3, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon appointed **Brandon Gebhart**, State Engineer, Wyoming State Engineer's Office (SEO), to the WSWC, serving on the Executive and Water Resources Committees. **Christopher Brown**, Sr. Assistant Attorney General, Water and Natural Resources Division, SEO and **Todd Parfitt**, Director, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will continue to serve as full members. **Jeff Cowley**, Interstate Streams Administrator, (SEO), and **Jennifer Zygmunt**, Water Quality Division Administrator, DEQ, will serve as alternates. We congratulate Brandon on his appointment and look forward to working with him.

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.