



July 13, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

The undersigned represent the steering committee for a Western water coalition that collectively represent thousands of Western farmers, ranchers, water providers, businesses and communities who help provide \$120 billion of agricultural production on millions of acres of productive land. We also represent many of the local and regional public water agencies that supply water to over 75 million Western urban, suburban and rural residents. In early June our coalition wrote to this Committee highlighting the acute water needs facing the Western United States and the solutions we are advocating to address them. Our steering committee thanks you for the work on this critical issue and encourages the Committee to favorably report the Western water elements found in Title VIII and IX of the Energy Infrastructure Act.

The infrastructure package under consideration is a historic opportunity to help the American economy. Dollars provided now will stoke the economic engine that powers the people and products that are driving America's recovery by ensuring the short and long-term water future of the West. These infrastructure projects would also bring vital, near-term construction jobs. Nationwide, American workers and the economy will also benefit from the increased demand for equipment and materials that these water projects will require from American companies.

In addition to the short-term benefits of investments in water infrastructure, changing Western hydrological conditions and expanding populations require immediate action to prevent worsening impacts from our failure to address aging water infrastructure and the risk that existing systems are unable to provide for our farms and communities. We believe the nation can prevent a breakdown in water supply and irrigation systems by investing in improvements to water infrastructure and expanding useable supplies today. This would also prevent further shortening of supplies and potential for increased conflict over water.

Our organizations collectively believe that federal investment in water conservation, water recycling, watershed management, conveyance, desalination, water transfers, groundwater storage, and surface storage is urgently needed for a diversified water management portfolio and that such a portfolio must be included in the forthcoming infrastructure or recovery package.

With the language that the Committee is hearing and voting on this week, it appears that you have heard our collective request. The package that the Committee has assembled represents roughly \$8 billion in much needed resources. The package includes substantial investments in repairing crumbling



water infrastructure in the West; infrastructure that is often many decades older than the nation's highway system that is often talked about as in need of repair. The package includes funds for a substantial increase in water recycling and water desalination, large investments in habitat restoration throughout the West, and new storage and conveyance, including both natural and traditional infrastructure. The package both aligns with the solutions water managers across the Western United States have requested for years and provides a balanced package of tools that local and regional managers may select from to best resolve the water needs and challenges in their local communities.

Given decades of neglect on this topic, resources in addition to the roughly \$8 billion could be allocated to this need. However, understanding the fiscal reality of the opportunity in front of us, our steering committee supports the Western water components found in Title XIII and IX in the Energy Infrastructure Act. We urge the Committee to pass these provisions out of Committee without a reduction in funding to any of the water infrastructure programs.