

# The Western Coalition of Arid States

## WESTCAS

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Testimony by Charlie L. Nylander, Chairman

Federal Affairs Committee

Western Coalition of Arid States (WESTCAS)

Submitted (for the record) to the Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee, Energy & Water

Regarding FY07 Bureau of Reclamation & Department of Energy Budget

April 30, 2006

The Western Coalition of Arid States (WESTCAS) is writing in support of the following multi-state federal programs, in priority order, under the Bureau of Reclamation and Department of Energy's budgets that we believe are deserving of your Subcommittee's support during the fiscal year 2007 budget process:

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Colorado River Front Work and Levee System, Water Management Reservoir near the All American Canal Sub activity | \$37.4 million |
| 2. Yuma Area Projects, Excavating Sediments Behind Laguna Dam  | \$3.5 million  |
| 3. Water Reclamation/Reuse Title XVI   | \$30 million   |
| 4. Water 2025  | \$14.5 million |
| 5. Science and Technology  | \$8.5 million  |
| 6. Atlas Mill Tailings Removal in Moab, Utah   | \$22.8 million |

WESTCAS is a coalition of Western towns and municipalities, water and wastewater agencies, irrigation districts, Native American nations, companies with water and wastewater concerns and professionals in the fields of engineering, the environmental sciences, and natural resources law and policy. WESTCAS was formed in 1992 by Western water and wastewater agencies concerned with the quality and management of water resources in the Arid West. A grass roots organization, WESTCAS is dedicated to encouraging the development of water programs and regulations which assure adequate supplies of high quality water for those living in the arid regions while protecting the environment.

### **COLORADO RIVER FRONT WORK AND LEVEE SYSTEM**

#### **Water Management Reservoir near the All-American Canal Sub activity**

Reclamation is completing a multi-phased study quantifying the need and options for regulatory storage to improve Colorado River management downstream of Lake Mead.

*The Voice of Water Quality in the Arid West*

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Reclamation has concluded that locating up to a 10,000 acre-foot capacity water management reservoir near the All-American Canal near Drop 2, 15 miles east of the Imperial Valley would significantly improve the flexibility of the Lower Colorado System. The reservoir's location would be of great benefit to the Colorado River Basin states. Benefits that include:

- conservation of reservoir system storage
- improving river regulation and water delivery scheduling
- providing opportunities for water conservation
- storage and conjunctive use programs
- and setting the stage for new cooperative water supply and water quality management endeavors with Mexico

Reclamation funding of \$37.4 million is needed in FY 2007 in order to obtain permits, acquire land, clear and prepare the site, design the reservoir and its inlet and outlet canals, and procure materials for construction.

This is one of four distinct sub activities to be undertaken in 2007 under the Water and Energy Management and Development Activity of the Colorado River Front Work and Levee System Project.

The President's FY 2007 request for this Activity is \$5.5 million. WESTCAS requests that Reclamation's funding for the Water Management Reservoir near the All American Canal sub activity are augmented so as to provide \$37.4 million for this work to progress sufficiently.

### **Yuma Area Projects, Excavating Sediments Behind Laguna Dam**

While work on a reservoir near the All-American Canal proceeds, there is an immediate need to restore limited Colorado River regulatory storage capacity downstream of Parker Dam. This can be partly accomplished by excavating sediments that have accumulated behind Laguna Dam since its completion in 1909. Reclamation funding of \$3.5 million is needed in FY 2007 to complete environmental compliance and procurement and begin dredging behind Laguna Dam.

This sub activity under the Yuma Area Projects, Facilities Maintenance and Rehabilitation activity would restore 1,100 acre-feet of storage behind Laguna Dam. Not only would this enhance the ability to regulate flows arriving at Imperial Dam, it would capture and re-regulate the water periodically released for the proper operation of Imperial Dam, benefiting both the Colorado River Basin States and Mexico.

WESTCAS requests that Reclamation's funding for sediment control be augmented so as to provide \$3.5 million for the work to excavate sediments from behind Laguna Dam.

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The construction of a new regulating reservoir, and dredging sediments behind an existing dam will critically improve water delivery efficiencies and prevent the loss of up to 200,000 acre-feet per year from Colorado River reservoir storage.

### **WATER RECLAMATION/REUSE TITLE XVI**

Projects funded under Title XVI of the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-575) and the Reclamation Recycling and Water Conservation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-266) will greatly enhance the Arid West's water supply reliability and the environment through effective water recycling and recovery of contaminated groundwater. Funding in the FY 2007 budget for previously unfunded projects, as well as the continued support for previously funded projects, is essential to realizing regional water supply reliability. The Bureau of Reclamation's budget request for research into the technologies and science of water recycling is another vital step toward making water reuse a viable alternative for communities faced with limited water supplies. WESTCAS urges your full support for increasing the Title XVI funding to \$30 million.

### **WATER 2025**

Implementation of Water 2025 includes water system optimization reviews that will assess the potential for water management improvements, financial assistance for irrigation and water districts in creating water markets and facilitating more efficient use of existing water supplies through water conservation, efficiency, and marketing projects. WESTCAS recommends your support of a Reclamation FY 2007 budget that includes \$14.5 million in funding for the Water 2025 Program.

### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

As the "Voice of Water Quality in the Arid West," WESTCAS advocates wise use of water resources by promoting scientifically-sound laws, regulations, funding, and policies that protect public health and the environment in the arid West. WESTCAS is dedicated to the use of sound science in the promulgation of rules and regulations, and supports funding for water quality research, in particular. The Science and Technology Program uses funds for the development of new solutions and technologies that respond to the Bureau's mission-related needs in this area. WESTCAS strongly recommends your support of a Reclamation FY 2007 budget that includes \$8,500,000 in funding for the Science and Technology Program.

### **ATLAS MINE TAILINGS CLEANUP**

In cooperation with the Utah State Environmental Quality Department, WESTCAS supports the President's budget request of \$22.8 million in FY 2007 for the purposes of moving forward with the clean-up of uranium mine tailings at the Atlas Site in Moab, Utah. WESTCAS supports the Governor of Utah's position that these mine tailings must be removed from their dangerously close proximity to the Colorado River and advocates removal as the only acceptable solution to this issue.

Thank you for considering our request.

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