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Testimony of Western Coalition of Arid States (WESTCAS)
Submitted (for the record) to the Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee, Interior & Related Agencies
Regarding FY07 Fish & Wildlife Service Budget

April 30, 2006

The Western Coalition of Arid States (WESTCAS) is submitting this testimony regarding the Presidents FY 2007 budget request for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

WESTCAS is a coalition of approximately 125 water and wastewater districts, cities and towns and professional organizations focused on water quality and water quantity issues in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Texas. Our mission is to work with Federal, State and Regional water quality and quantity agencies to promote scientifically-sound law, regulations, appropriations and policies that protect public health in the environment of the arid West.

WESTCAS supports the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service mission of working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The budget of the FWS is designed to support this mission. WESTCAS welcomes opportunities to partner with FWS in the promotion of this mission and in that we support several programs outlined within the FY 2007 budget.

Protecting the environment requires the development of best management practices and policies that can be implemented, validated and measured. In administering the Endangered Species Act the FWS is developing partnerships with agencies and scientific standards for its implementation. WESTCAS supports the FY 2007 budget for this critical program and requests an evaluation of additional funding opportunities for the Endangered Species. Specifically WESTCAS would like to ensure the Colorado River Flow study is fully funded. This Colorado river and its basin is the major water source for millions of people in Colorado, Nevada, California and Arizona.

Thank you for considering our request.

The Voice of Water Quality in the Arid West

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W E S T C A S

State and tribal wildlife grants provide funding to ensure research and development continues within the FWS program. The FWS program has changed dramatically over time, many changes due to research performed. Therefore, it is critical to continue to evaluate the environment and the effects of discharges and encroachment on wildlife. This evaluation provides the foundation for future research into minimizing those effects and the development of practices, regulations and standards that allow for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Private Stewardship program has enhanced the management of non-native species, restoration of habitat and assisted in reforming habitats which support imperiled species. WESTCAS supports these programs and the appropriation for the continuation of the Private Stewardship program.

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