



The Western Coalition of Arid States

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March 24, 2017

Via email: pruit.scot@epa.gov

Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Water Resources in Arid States

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

In the arid western United States, water is a precious resource that must be carefully managed to meet water demands and support the vibrant economy of the region. WESTCAS is a coalition of nearly 100 water and wastewater districts, cities, towns, and professional organizations focused on water quality and water quantity issues in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas. Our mission is to work with Federal, State, and regional water quality and quantity agencies to promote scientifically-sound laws, regulations, appropriations and policies that protect public health and the environment while meeting water needs in the arid west.

We are the people whose job it is to ensure that the water needs of the arid west are met. As a group, our membership has a wealth of experience and expertise, and as an Association we have addressed arid west water issues for 25 years. As you start your term as Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, we offer you our insights and understanding of western water resource issues.

From our perspective, the three most pressing water issues are: resiliency in drought, comprehensive water management, and regulatory flexibility for arid conditions.

The Voice of Water Quality in the Arid West

P. O. Box 77561 Washington, D. C. 20013-7561

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Resiliency in water resources is the ability to meet demands under differing conditions. Adapting our water systems to be resilient in times of drought is a challenge that must be faced in spite of uncertainty in the recurrence and magnitude of drought conditions. As water resource managers, we must develop and implement plans to meet current and future demands for water in the midst of drought and population growth in the arid west. Encouraging water conservation is a key aspect of building resiliency. Water system resiliency in the west also depends on having adequate water treatment, storage, and transmission facilities. To provide for the growing population, we need to plan and construct new water infrastructure. *To build resiliency, we need to encourage conservation by non-taxable rebates and obtain the technical and financial support to plan and build resiliency into our water systems.*

Comprehensive water management recognizes all water as a resource: ground water, surface water, storm water, and wastewater. In order to meet water demands, we must manage our resources as “one water”. The most reliable drought-proof water source is reclaimed water. The technology exists for treating wastewater to meet drinking water standards. A few forward-thinking cities in the arid West have implemented potable reuse systems. Federal funding for reuse projects through the Bureau of Reclamation’s Title XVI program falls far short of the need and opportunity to develop this water supply source. *Increased availability of funding for reuse projects is essential in developing and comprehensively managing our water supplies.*

The need for **regulatory flexibility** was the guiding principle that launched WESTCAS as an organization 25 years ago. The concept is simple – build regulatory structures and regulations that recognize regional differences, while also providing the certainty in what is required for compliance. Regulations developed for perennial streams and rivers may not be appropriate for ephemeral streams in the arid west. *We support regulations that are scientifically-based and regionally appropriate by giving states the ability to establish standards that are suitable for their climate conditions and that are compliant with EPA oversight.*

WESTCAS hopes that you will consider these issues as you move forward with in this administration. We stand ready to provide further detail or discussion on water resources in the arid west.

Sincerely,



Kelly Collins
President

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cc:

President Donald J. Trump – President@whitehouse.gov

House Natural Resources Committee

The Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

House Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Greg Walden, Chair
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pauline, Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H305, The Capitol
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
H305, The Capitol
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Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S128, The Capitol
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S128 The Capitol
Washington DC 20510

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
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The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member
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