

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2016

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Room 6612
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Western drought funding in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016

Dear Secretary Jewell:

We are writing to express our strong support for the use of western drought money included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113) on projects that will make water available now through the next three years to alleviate the impact of the extraordinary drought on local communities in California and other western states. The only water supplies that can be developed this quickly are through projects that improve water efficiency in the urban and agricultural sectors and through water recycling and desalination.

In May, 2015 your office announced the availability of \$50 million for California and 11 other western states from funding made available in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-245) for drought relief. Of that funding, \$14 million was allocated to support the Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI (recycled water and desalination) and WaterSMART (water efficiency) projects. Now that the amount of discretionary western drought money available to the Department has been doubled for this year, we would like to see a significant additional investment made in these two critical Bureau water supply programs.

Water recycling and water efficiency projects are a good investment for this federal money because they support the mitigation of both the short and long-term effects of the current and potential future droughts in the western United States. While Members of Congress continue to discuss ways that we can help the western United States through legislative action, we hope your office will use its discretionary spending authority provided through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 to address the immediate drought conditions.

Both the Title XVI and WaterSMART programs represent a good partnership between the federal and local governments—as both require a cost-sharing contribution of non-federal money. Providing additional funding for these programs at the federal level has the potential to more than double the local investment in water conservation and recycling programs. Last year's investment of an additional \$14 million in these programs was matched by \$14 to \$28 million of non-federal money into projects that

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mitigate both short and long term drought effects. In addition to bringing federal and local money together, these programs have a positive impact on the interest rate local agencies are able to secure if they are financing projects through the bond market. In return, those savings are passed along to ratepayers.

While there is no one project or program that will provide a solution to the drought, the Bureau's Title XVI and WaterSMART programs have proven that there is capacity to conserve water as well as to create additional water supply in the middle of a drought. Furthermore, the recipients of federal funds through these grant programs, including agencies within our Congressional districts, have proven to be good stewards of federal funding and model project partners for the Bureau of Reclamation.

As both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees noted in their respective committee reports, it is incumbent on the Bureau of Reclamation to lead the way in increasing the water that is available from year to year and to incentivize more efficient use of the water that is available. Additionally, the only way to mitigate the effects of future droughts is through a strategy of providing a combination of additional storage, improved conveyance, and increased efficiencies in the uses of water both for agriculture and potable purposes. We believe both programs are vital to the western states as a way to achieve these goals.

We look forward to continuing to work with you as we seek to mitigate drought impacts on our state and throughout the western United States.

Sincerely,



Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



Paul Cook
Member of Congress



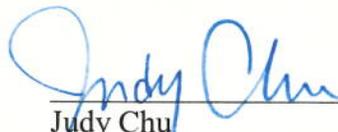
Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress



Ed Royce
Member of Congress



Norma Torres
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress