Date

Senator John Kennedy, Chair
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, Appropriations
United States Senate

Senator Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, Appropriations
United States Senate

Representative Chuck Fleischmann, Chair
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Representative Marcy Kaptur, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairmen Kennedy and Fleischmann, Ranking Members Murray and Kaptur, and Members of the Subcommittees:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2027 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we write to urge the Subcommittees to provide robust funding for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART programs. In partnership with local and state governments, WaterSMART is the primary federal program for investing in water conservation, efficiency, and reuse. As the West becomes hotter and drier, these strategies are crucial for building drought resilience and ensuring the safe, reliable, and efficient management of water resources for people, business, and agriculture. Projects funded by WaterSMART often provide the dual benefit of water savings and ecosystem benefits, resulting in a high return on investment.

Most WaterSMART projects require a non-federal cost share, leveraging limited federal dollars with non-federal financial resources. To date, Reclamation has funded, or plans to fund, 2,414 projects with $3.37 billion in WaterSMART funding, leveraged with $8.9 billion in non-federal funding, across the western states. Completed WaterSMART projects are saving an estimated 1.7 million acre-feet of water per year, enough water for more than 4.6 million people, and protecting natural resources.

For example:

- The Southern Nevada Water Authority received funding in 2022 and 2023 totaling $4 million to convert turf grass to water-efficient landscapes, saving an estimated 908 million gallons of water annually – equivalent to the annual water use of approximately 8,300 homes.
- Gilbert, AZ, received $1.9 million in 2023 to install 38,642 advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) meters for residential customers that save water through enhanced leak detection and helping customers identify water saving opportunities. The project is estimated to save 708 million gallons of water annually.
- The Duchesne County Water Conservancy District in Utah received $2 million in 2024 to convert three miles of earthen canal to high-density polyethylene pipe. The project is expected to result in annual water savings of 604 million gallons currently lost to seepage and evaporation.
- The San Diego County Water Authority in California received $3 million in 2024 to restore and enhance approximately 42.5 acres in an area heavily impacted by wildfire. The project will create critical native habitats in a developed urban area and will improve floodplain hydraulics and downstream water quality.
- Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, in partnership with the Nueces River Authority in Texas, received nearly $400 thousand in 2023 to develop medium- and long-range predictions of

storage levels in the Nueces reservoir system. The project will support sufficient freshwater for ecological health, water supply reliability, and adaptation and resilience of local communities to droughts and floods.

Billions of dollars have been invested to supply water for communities, farms, and industries in the arid West. Addressing long-term water scarcity will require a comparable investment that cannot be funded entirely at the local and state levels. It is crucial that WaterSMART funding continue to help communities in the West have access to sustainable, affordable water resources.

Sincerely,