



Via Electronic Mail

March 12, 2025

The Honorable John Kennedy
Chair, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Chuck Fleischman
Chair, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Federal Grant Funding

Dear Chairman Kennedy, Chairman Fleischman, Ranking Member Murray, and Ranking Member Kaptur:

On behalf of the Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group (CVRWMG), I respectfully urge your support for continued funding for U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Grants Program.

The CVRWMG includes the Coachella Valley Water District, Coachella Water Authority/Coachella Sanitary District, Desert Water Agency, Indio Water Authority, Mission Springs Water District, and Valley Sanitary District. The group represents a collaborative effort to implement the Coachella Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan. IRWM is a collaborative effort to identify and implement water management solutions on a regional scale that increase regional self-reliance, reduce conflict, and build long-term water security. The CVRWMG's region is located in central Riverside County, California.

The Coachella Valley, like many areas in the West, are subject to frequent drought conditions due to the region's arid climate and drought emergencies. The region relies on water from the Colorado River to replenish and sustainably maintain the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin. However, the Colorado River is facing significant challenges due to prolonged droughts. In August 2022, the Department of Interior declared a Tier 2 shortage for the Colorado River, prompting California to voluntarily reduce its water use. In November 2022, CVWD approved two voluntary actions to reduce Colorado River replenishment from 2022 to 2025. This reduction will impact our region's water supply reliability, as imported water is crucial to replenishing the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin.

Federal funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has been instrumental in addressing these issues by providing critical funding for water conservation, infrastructure improvements, and sustainable water management practices. In August 2024, Reclamation awarded the CVRWMG \$5 million from the WaterSMART: Water and Energy Efficiency Grants Program to implement the Coachella Valley Regional Conservation and Incentive Program, Inoperable Valve Replacement, and Meter Replacement Project (Project), which included four components to address drought impacts in the region. The Project will assist the region's water purveyors in effectively reducing water demands, leading to a reduction in water demand, and consequently decreasing reliance on the Colorado River.

Continued support for the federal funding programs is vital for maintaining the progress we have made and for addressing future water challenges. I urge you to advocate for continued funding for the WaterSMART program and other funding opportunities to assist us in addressing water supply reliability in the upcoming budget discussions. Investing in these programs is an investment in the sustainability and resilience of our water resources, which is critical for the well-being of the communities we serve.

Thank you for your leadership in this matter, and I appreciate your ongoing commitment to supporting initiatives that benefit our region and look forward to your continued advocacy.

Sincerely,



Joanne Le

On behalf of the Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group
Director of Environmental Services
Coachella Valley Water District

CVRWMG agency representatives:

Steve Johnson, Desert Water Agency
Ron Buchwald, Valley Sanitary District
Castulo Estrada, Coachella Water Authority
Reymundo Trejo, Indio Water Authority
Marion Champion, Mission Springs Water District