

# National Coalition Urges Additional Water, Conservation Resources in Reconciliation Package

*Additional resources are necessary to improve long-term management and resilience of water resources and the natural environment*



With over 80 percent of the West currently experiencing severe, extreme or exceptional drought conditions, and more than 2.2 million acres of land already burned across the Western states, a national coalition representing agriculture, public water agencies and the environmental and conservation communities urged Congress to include resources for additional water, forestry and ecosystem restoration programs as it considers another package of investments using the reconciliation process.

On August 10, the Senate passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which included more than \$8 billion to address critical Western water supply needs, including to repair aging dams and canals, build new surface and groundwater storage and conveyance facilities, fund water conservation and recycling projects, and enhance watershed management and improve ecosystems.

On Friday, the Environmental Defense Fund, Irrigation Association, The Freshwater Trust, and Trout Unlimited joined the Western Water Infrastructure Coalition in a letter to Congressional leadership calling out funding gaps that remain in areas critical to counteracting the historic drought and wildfire currently gripping the West.

“Additional resources are necessary to improve the long-term management and resilience of water resources and the natural environment amongst changing climate and hydrological conditions,” the coalition letter said.

In the letter, the coalition identified additional funding needs for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to accelerate the pace and scale of restoration that improves ecosystem resiliency,

reduces the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, deploys water technology, boosts conservation programs, and responds to the ongoing drought emergency.

The following is a list of specific funding requests included in the letter:

- **Double funding** for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs, which promote a variety of practices that can aid in drought protection of agricultural operations.
- **\$30 billion** for USDA's Forest Service to accelerate restoration actions that reduce hazardous fuels and improve overall forest and watershed health.
- **\$170 million** for DOI technology deployment programs that allow for better water management and decision making at the Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Geological Survey.
- **\$1.5 billion** for emergency drought response activities, including relief for dry groundwater wells, compensated water use reductions, environmental response, and power costs.

In addition to increasing funds for these critical priorities, the coalition urged that the funds be deployed with a focus on achieving durable and quantifiable watershed resilience outcomes, which can be achieved by working across federal funding silos and ensuring that projects are coordinated and combined to achieve the greatest benefit for the least cost.

The letter concluded by noting that timely federal investments in a mixed water management portfolio will spur economic recovery and prepare our country to meet the diverse water infrastructure needs of the next generation.

[Click here](#) for the letter to Congressional leadership.

### **About Western Water Infrastructure Coalition**

The Western Water Infrastructure Coalition includes organizations from 15 states that collectively represent \$120 billion in agricultural production—nearly one-third of all agricultural production in the country—and many of the local and regional public water agencies that supply water to more than 75 million urban, suburban and rural residents.

### **About Association of Water Agencies**

The [Association of California Water Agencies](#) (ACWA) is a statewide association of public agencies whose more than 450 members are responsible for about 90% of the water delivered in California. For more than a century, ACWA's mission has been clear: to help members promote the development, management and use of good quality water at the lowest practical cost and in an environmentally responsible manner.

### **About California Farm Bureau:**

The [California Farm Bureau](#) works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 32,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of more than 5.5 million Farm Bureau members.

**About Family Farm Alliance:**

The Family Farm Alliance is a powerful advocate for family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in seventeen Western states. The Alliance is focused on one mission - To ensure the availability of reliable, affordable irrigation water supplies to Western farmers and ranchers.

**About National Water Resources Association:**

National Water Resources Association advocates federal policies, legislation, and regulations promoting protection, management, development, and beneficial use of water resources. The association is dedicated to achieving sustainable water supply for all beneficial uses in an economical and environmentally responsible manner.

**About Western Growers:**

Founded in 1926, Western Growers represents local and regional family farmers growing fresh produce in Arizona, California, Colorado and New Mexico. Our members and their workers provide over half the nation's fresh fruits, vegetables and tree nuts, including half of America's fresh organic produce.