



NATURAL RESOURCES

The Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015

Issue: A complex and inconsistent system of laws, court decisions, and regulations at the state and federal levels is resulting in the mismanagement of critical water resources throughout the West. The current regulatory framework that governs the movement and storage of water is based upon out-of-date science and a regulatory morass, resulting in the misallocation of precious water resources and a lack of adequate water storage. These shortcomings are negatively impacting local economies across the Western United States, pose an increasing threat to America's food security, and have placed undue burdens on our environment.

Solution: The "***Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015***" addresses the underlying policy failures that are contributing to increasingly severe drought conditions in communities across the Western United States.

- ***Improving Science and Transparency.*** Requires federal and state agencies to use the most updated available science in water management decisions and to allow the public to access such data, delivering improved habitat conditions for species without adversely affecting millions of people.
- ***Expanding Infrastructure.*** Enacts "one-stop-shop" permitting reforms aimed at building infrastructure to capture more water.
- ***Expanding Storage.*** Requires the federal government to expedite and complete consideration of feasibility studies for water storage projects that have been languishing in bureaucratic purgatory for over ten years.
- ***Regulatory Common Sense.*** Requires federal agencies to consider other less water-costly alternatives that would benefit the listed species, such as installing temporary barriers to prevent saltwater intrusion or removing non-native predator fish that eat protected species.
- ***Emergency Drought Response.*** Provides federal agencies the operational flexibility during times of crises to effectively make and implement operational decisions in real time without unnecessary regulatory hurdles.
- ***Water Rights Protection:*** Prevents federal agencies from requiring certain entities to relinquish their water rights to the United States in order to use public lands.

Based on previous legislative efforts that were initially developed on a bipartisan and bicameral basis, the "***Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015***" is a balanced and thoughtful solution to address America's water resource needs.

For more information, contact the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans at (202) 225-8331.