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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

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REPUBLICAN CHIEF OF STAFF

March 9, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

As you know, the recently enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (P.L. 111-5) allocated \$1 billion to the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). At a time when much of Reclamation's water infrastructure is on the verge of collapse and there is a need to promote renewable and emissions-free hydropower, we hope that the Department will focus on these priorities as it examines "shovel-ready" projects.

One of Reclamation's primary responsibilities is water delivery and maintenance of water infrastructure. All across the country there are Reclamation projects in serious, pressing need of stabilization. It is critical to meeting Reclamation's mission that repairing and safe-guarding infrastructure should come first and not after the launching of new initiatives in the allocation of stimulus funding.

Late last year, a list of possible stimulus funding projects from Department officials disappointingly proposed the purchase of hybrid vehicles. Such an expenditure is not acceptable when Western communities are facing severe water shortages due to aging/incomplete water infrastructure and environmental restrictions brought on by litigation.

Reclamation's projects have provided numerous benefits to our Nation for over a century. Its legendary infrastructure helped win world wars and populate the West and, even today, serves a vital function in providing food for domestic and international consumers. In addition, Reclamation is the second-leading domestic producer of renewable and emissions-free

hydropower. Despite these historic successes, the agency and some of its customers have been challenged in the federal courts to redistribute waters away from communities in need. These resulting water cutbacks and associated land retirements will continue to have a very detrimental impact on jobs and regional economies.

For the reasons above, we write to request that Reclamation detail how it plans to prioritize and publish its \$1 billion in new spending. We also urge you to pursue regulatory streamlining, implementing Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act "one-stop shop permitting" offices, and reducing staff overhead so that more funds can be dedicated to "on-the ground" construction jobs.

We hope you agree that Western water and power users and American taxpayers deserve transparent answers on how Reclamation will expend these resources. As such, we ask that you provide us monthly updates on these information requests. We look forward to your response and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Rep. Doc Hastings
Ranking Member, Committee
on Natural Resources



Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member, Subcommittee
on Water and Power



Rep. Rob Bishop, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks,
Forests and Public Lands



Rep. Doug Lamborn, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
and Mineral Resources

The Honorable Ken Salazar

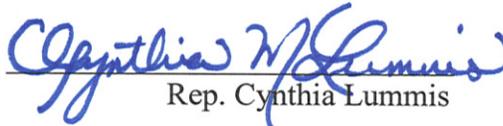
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Rep. Adrian Smith


Rep. Jason Chaffetz


Rep. Mike Coffman


Rep. Cynthia Lummis


Rep. Tom McClintock

cc: Acting Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Bill McDonald