

Ranking Members Westerman and Bentz and Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today and share my perspective on one of the most pressing topics in the American West; water supply and drought resilience. Thank you to Congressman Moore for the invitation to speak briefly to the importance of water infrastructure and our growing population.

The State of Utah is experiencing unprecedented drought in most of its regions. The effect of which is record low river runoff yields that result in record low reservoir storage. If it were not for storage behind dams, most of Utah would not be able to meet its population's water demands in 2021, let alone in future years. The majority of dam storage was built the United States through Bureau of Reclamation projects constructed in the 20th century.

The population in Utah is projected to double again by 2065, which means water demand will continue to rise. Additional and sufficient infrastructure will be the discussion to prevent a water crisis in Utah moving forward. Infrastructure needs include the construction of new facilities to meet ever-increasing demands and the repair and replacement of much of the federal and local infrastructure that was built more than 50 years ago.

Water conservation is the largest water supply project proposed for northern Utah in that driving down the per capita usage of water will, in essence, make available supplies for the next generation. Even with best results from conservation programs, there is a need for additional water development for high population growth areas such as those being experienced in Utah. The Department of the Interior and Bureau of Reclamation are not presently funded at levels to help even with the repair and replacement needs of facilities owned the United States. This may create an undue burden upon the current water users and ratepayers. It is likely that local governments will be able to handle projects for the next few generations as long as the United States remains engaged fiscally in maintaining their facilities.

Some concepts that would warrant consideration are:

- Increased funding for bureau of reclamation repair and replacement projects
- Focusing existing federal grant program funding on facilities constructed by the United States
- Enhancement of monies for water conservation improvements
- Enhanced federal facilities for purposes of drought resiliency

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