



To: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee Republican Staff; Kiel Weaver (Kiel.Weaver@mail.house.gov), Annick Miller (Annick.Miller@mail.house.gov), and Rob MacGregor (Robert.MacGregor@mail.house.gov)
Date: May 18, 2021
Subject: Republican Forum on Western Drought

The Committee on Natural Resources Republicans will hold a forum to examine the growing catastrophic drought situation across the West on **Wednesday, May 19, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. (EDT)** online via Zoom. Republican Members on and off the Committee will participate in this forum.

Member offices are requested to notify Chandler Guy (Chandler.Guy@mail.house.gov) **no later than Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. (EDT)** if their Member intends to participate. All Members are encouraged to participate. This is a virtual forum, but Members may participate virtually from Rayburn House Office Building 2075 if they choose, using their own devices and headphones. Committee Republican Staff will be present to assist during the forum.

Please contact Bailey La Sage (Bailey.LaSage@mail.house.gov) should any technical difficulties arise.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- As we head into the summer months, **the drought conditions across the American West will only continue worsening.** Given the lack of attention the Democrat Majority has given to this serious issue, this forum is an excellent opportunity to examine Republican solutions to water challenges nationwide.
- **Droughts impact every aspect of our lives.**
 - **Less Water:** a reduction in snowpack and rain events mean inadequate water supplies for agriculture, fish, wildlife, and urban needs.
 - **Less Food:** farmers reduce planting; producers sell cattle.
 - **Less Jobs:** beyond the impacts to agriculture, reductions in water supply impact manufacturing facilities.
 - **Increased Fires:** prolonged dry conditions increase the risk of catastrophic wildfires, as dry brush, and forests act as tinderboxes for the smallest spark.

This document has not been officially adopted by the Committee on Natural Resources and therefore may not necessarily reflect the views of its Members.

- There are numerous short, mid, and long-term solutions that the Administration and the Congress can pursue to address the ongoing drought conditions. This forum will facilitate that discussion.

II. WITNESSES (three minutes of testimony from each):

- **Mr. Brett R. Barbre**, General Manager Yorba Linda Water District, CA
- **The Honorable Donnie Boyd**, County Commissioner, Klamath County, OR
- **Mr. Ross Copeland**, County Director, Texas Farm Bureau
- **The Honorable Travis Day**, County Commissioner, Sierra County, NM
- **Mr. Tage Flint**, Weber Basin Water Conservancy District, Utah
- **Mr. Todd Neves**, fourth generation farmer, Westlands Water District, CA
- **Mr. Les Shaw**, Region 1 Vice President, South Dakota Stockgrowers Association
- **Mr. Jeff Sutton**, Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, Vice Chair Sites Joint Power Authority, CA

Note: There may be additions to this list.

III. BACKGROUND

Settling the West

The California Gold Rush of 1849, the Homestead Act of 1862 and other factors encouraged settlement of the western United States (West) throughout the 19th and parts of the 20th century.¹ However, much of the area was and continues to be semi-arid or arid, with very little precipitation during most of the year. Most of the natural water storage occurred in the form of snowpack in the mountainous regions. As the snow melted, large volumes of water rapidly flowed through river valleys in the spring, followed by dry riverbeds in the summer and early fall months.

As water demand increased from agriculture and other uses, interest in storing water runoff for later use led to attempts at constructing water storage projects. Without water storage, settlers had limited farming opportunities in the summer months when river flows were at their lowest or did not exist.² At that time, private and state-sponsored storage and

¹ <https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2012/winter/homestead.pdf>

² <https://www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=183>

irrigation ventures often failed because of the lack of financial resources and engineering skill.³

In 1901, U.S. Senators Henry Hansborough of North Dakota and Francis G. Newlands of Nevada proposed legislation to use money from the sale of public lands to fund water projects.⁴ The senators found an ally in President Theodore Roosevelt. On December 3, 1901, shortly after assuming the presidency, President Roosevelt sent a message to the Congress in which, among many topics discussed, he expressed support for the development of the West and the creation of a federal reclamation program; proclaiming “In the arid region it is water, not land, which measures production. The western half of the United States would sustain a population greater than that of our whole country today if the waters that now run to waste were saved and used for irrigation.”⁵

A year later, Roosevelt signed what is known as the Reclamation Act of 1902 (Act) into law. The Act authorized federal efforts in the large-scale planning and construction of irrigation works for the storage, diversion, and development of waters in arid and semi-arid western states.⁶ Within a year, the federal Reclamation Service (now called the Bureau of Reclamation) administratively authorized five projects for construction and twenty-four projects by 1907.⁷

To date, there are more than 180 multi-purpose and single-purpose traditional federal water projects throughout the West (see Figure 1) authorized by the Reclamation laws.⁸ In addition, the agency currently provides funding or technical assistance for five rural water supply projects,⁹ 63 water recycling projects¹⁰ and five desalination projects.¹¹ Most of the West’s largest cities – particularly those that benefit from Colorado River basin waters (Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Albuquerque and others) – owe their continued existence to the Bureau of Reclamation’s multi-purpose projects.

³ <https://www.usbr.gov/history/2011NEWBRIEFHISTORY.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.usbr.gov/projects/pdf.php?id=183>

⁵ Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, with the annual message of the President transmitted to Congress December 3, 1901.

⁶ 32 Stat. 388 (43 U.S.C. §391)

⁷ The Arid West - The Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902

⁸ <https://www.usbr.gov/history/2011NEWBRIEFHISTORY.pdf>

⁹ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46308>

¹⁰ There are 6 active traditional Title XVI projects and 57 active Sec. 4007 Title XVI projects.

¹¹ P.L. 116-94 made funding available for the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project, the Kay Bailey Hutchison Desalination Plant, the North Pleasant Valley Desalter Facility, and the Mission Basin Groundwater Purification Facility Well Expansion and Brine Minimization. P.L. 116-133 made funding available for the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project, the North Pleasant Valley Desalter Facility, and the Energy-Efficient Brackish Groundwater Desalination Project.

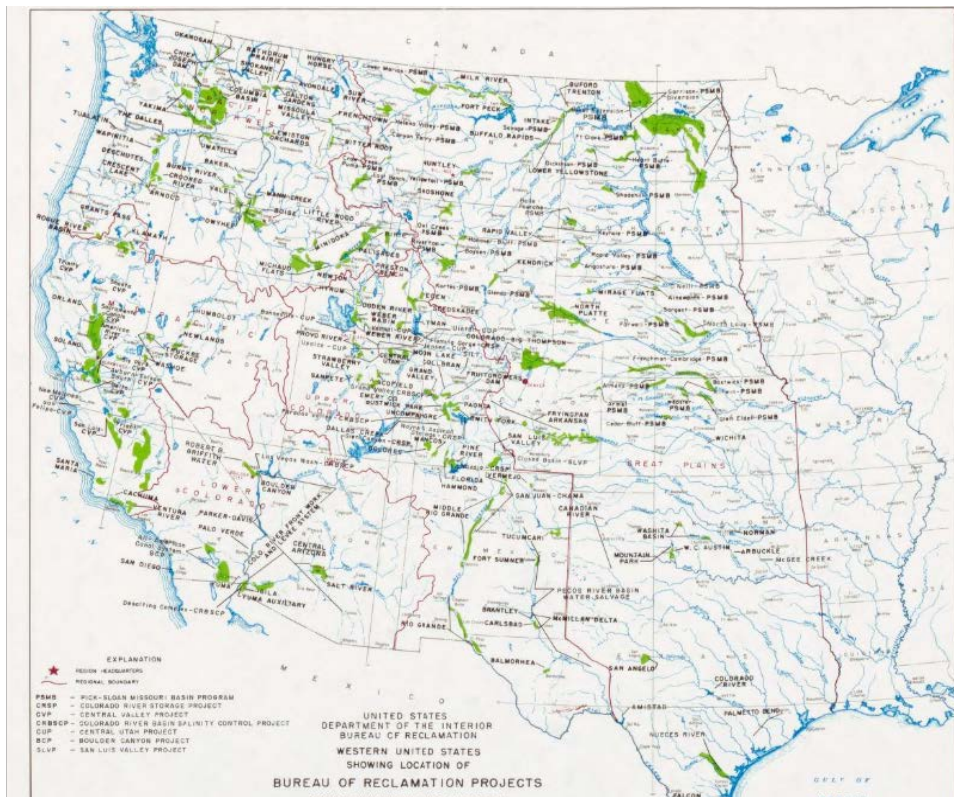


Figure 1: Bureau of Reclamation Projects

Source: Library of Congress

Today, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is the nation’s largest wholesale water supplier, providing water to farmers that produce 60% of the nation’s vegetables and one quarter of its fresh fruit and nut crops.¹² Additionally, Reclamation projects provide water to rural and urban water users and combine to make it the second largest producer of hydropower in the United States.¹³ Grand Coulee Dam, located in central Washington state, is the largest hydropower producing facility in the nation and is credited with helping win World War II (by providing electrical power to support construction at wartime shipyards and at aluminum smelters making the raw material for Boeing’s B-17 and B-29 aircraft production).¹⁴

Reclamation projects continued to be built well into the 1960’s. For example, President John F. Kennedy dedicated the San Luis Reservoir in the San Joaquin Valley, California, in 1962 (see Photo 1). In his remarks, Kennedy said, “This is a fast trip, but if it had no other benefit than to permit us to look at this valley and others like it across the country, where we can see the greenest and richest earth producing the greatest and richest crops in the country, and then a mile away see the same earth and see it brown and dusty and useless, and all because there's water in one place and there isn't in another. I know of no better trip for any President or any Member of the House or Senate, or indeed any citizen, particularly those of us who live in the East, where

¹² <https://www.usbr.gov/main/about/fact.html>

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ BPA powered the industry that helped win World War II

water is everywhere and is a burden, to realize how very precious it is here in the western United States.”¹⁵

Multi-purpose Reclamation projects include the Central Valley Project (CVP) in California, the Colorado River Basin Project, which includes Hoover Dam, the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, the Central Arizona Project, the Central Utah Project, and the Columbia Basin Project in Washington state. (See Figure 1).

Changing Times

With the enactment of federal environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C 4321 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq., ESA) in the 1970’s, many of Reclamation’s project operations and other agency activities on federal lands and elsewhere changed to account for analyses, costs and regulations created by these and other laws. In particular, administrative actions and species listing under ESA, and subsequent litigation continue to have a profound impact on federal activities such as federal dam operations and water deliveries.

Related to this forum, the CVP in California and those who rely on it for water supplies have been subject to ESA controversies and litigation. Reclamation’s CVP operations and water deliveries are subject to flow requirements for the endangered three-inch Delta smelt and endangered and threatened salmon species. Each of these species is regulated by a different federal agency (Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Delta smelt and Department of Commerce’s National Marine Fisheries Service for migratory salmon) and can have water requirements which conflict with one another. In both cases, however, federal requirements for these fish can divert water that would have been destined for communities and farms. ¹⁶ Combined with other federal water requirements under the federal Central Valley Project Improvement Act, the State of California’s water quality standards and the lack of integrated new water storage, the CVP and the State Water Project’s operations have changed dramatically over the last forty years.¹⁷ Similarly, Reclamation’s Klamath Project in northern California and southern Oregon can have conflicting needs for different endangered species of fish (two suckerfish and Coho salmon) and multiple human needs upstream and downstream. Lack of precipitation from drought can exacerbate these conflicting needs for species and human populations.



Figure 2: John F. Kennedy dedication of San Luis Reservoir in 1962

Source: National Archives

¹⁵ <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-los-banos-california-the-ground-breaking-ceremonies-for-the-san-luis-dam>

¹⁶ <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/bdo/ito/biop.html>

¹⁷ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45342>

Drought will also have a serious negative impact on land-based species. For example, both the greater sage grouse (GSG) and the lesser prairie chicken (LPC) are heavily dependent on precipitation for survival. For the GSG, drought can adversely affect population recruitment¹⁸ such that chick survival is negatively influenced by water scarcity¹⁹ and at small numbers, populations are less capable of recovering and more prone to extirpation. According to reports completed by the U.S. Geological Survey, GSG population abundance appears to correspond to years of drought dating back 60 years.²⁰ In fact, scientific model estimates show a major reduction in abundance range-wide, which appeared to correspond to a widespread drought that spanned the western United States from 1986 through 2016.²¹ Drought also can lead to catastrophic wildfires, which alone have destroyed 20% of priority sage grouse habitat across the Great Basin since 2000.²² Drought also has severe impacts on the LPC and can affect forage production which may decrease vegetative cover resulting in declining numbers for the LPC.²³

These impacts caused by drought could allow the current administration to take advantage of the situation by listing both the LPC and GSG, resulting in increased restrictions to farmers, ranchers, and energy producers across the West. These listings would not only be devastating, but could jeopardize ongoing significant conservation efforts and investments. For example, 20 new mitigation projects totaling roughly \$3.5 million were conducted for the LPC in 2020 alone.²⁴ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced that it will issue a 12-month finding this spring to decide the LPC's status under the ESA.²⁵ Additionally, recent reports²⁶ highlighting declining numbers for the GSG have led to some environmental groups calling for the removal of a 2014 Appropriations rider that would prevent a GSG ESA listing.²⁷ The Department of the Interior announced last week that it will reopen and potentially revise, GSG

¹⁸ Blomberg, E.J., Sedinger, J.S., Atamian, M.T., and Nonne, D.V., 2012, Characteristics of climate and landscape disturbance influence the dynamics of greater sage-grouse populations: *Ecosphere*, v. 3, no. 6, p. 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1890/ES11-00304.1>.

¹⁹ Gibson, D., Blomberg, E.J., Atamian, M.T., and Sedinger, J.S., 2017, Weather, habitat composition, and female behavior interact to modify offspring survival in greater sage-grouse: *Ecological Applications*, v. 27, no. 1, p. 168–181, <https://doi.org/10.1002/eap.1427>.

²⁰ U.S. Geological Survey, Range-wide Greater Sage-Grouse Hierarchical Monitoring Framework: Implications for Defining Population Boundaries, Trend Estimation, and a Targeted Annual Warning System, 2020. <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2020/1154/ofr20201154.pdf>, at 89.

²¹ Piechota, T., Timilsena, J., Tootle, G., and Hidalgo, H., 2004, The western U.S. drought—How bad is it?: Washington, D.C., *Eos*, v. 85, no. 32, p. 301–304, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2004EO320001>. And Williams, A.P., Cook, E.R., Smerdon, J.E., Cook, B.I., Abatzoglou, J.T., Bolles, K., Baek, S.H., Badger, A.M., and Livneh, B., 2020, Large contribution from anthropogenic warming to an emerging North American megadrought: *Science*, v. 368, no. 6488, p. 314–318, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaz9600>.

²² U.S. Geological Survey, Sagebrush Conservation Strategy—Challenges to Sagebrush Conservation, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2020/1125/ofr20201125.pdf>. P. xxxii.

²³ Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2020 Annual Report for the Range-wide Oil and Gas Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken, 2021, p. 15.

²⁴ *Id.* at 7.

²⁵ Hausman, Alyssa B. “Re: Embargoed: FWS Seeks Public Comment on Lesser Prairie-Chicken Habitat Conservation Plan for Renewable Energy Development in Great Plains.” 12 April 2021. E-mail.

²⁶ U.S. Geological Survey, Range-wide Greater Sage-Grouse Hierarchical Monitoring Framework: Implications for Defining Population Boundaries, Trend Estimation, and a Targeted Annual Warning System, 2020. <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2020/1154/ofr20201154.pdf>, and U.S. Geological Survey, Sagebrush Conservation Strategy—Challenges to Sagebrush Conservation, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2020/1125/ofr20201125.pdf>.

²⁷ Sierra Club et al, Re: Please Exclude the Greater Sage-Grouse Rider from the FY 2022 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill, https://www.eenews.net/assets/2021/05/05/document_daily_01.pdf, 5.4.21.

conservation plans covering tens of millions of acres of federal lands across the West.²⁸ These actions could lead to increased regulations and restrictions for western landowners and others.

Current Drought Conditions

On March 18, 2021, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its U.S. Spring Outlook which projected warmer-than-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation throughout the West. Specifically, the agency indicated that the drier conditions are the “contributing factors to the development and intensification of what represents the most significant U.S. spring drought since 2013, which will impact approximately 74 million people.”²⁹

For months, drought conditions have been worsening throughout the West and are now beginning to impact water supplies for many communities.³⁰ For example, water levels are critically low for the Klamath project.³¹ In response, Reclamation recently announced that the project’s “A” Canal will remain closed for the 2021 irrigation season, meaning that many of the nearby Klamath project irrigators will get no water allocation for the first time in the history of the project.³² In California, the water allocations for many agricultural users in the CVP have been paused for the season.³³ If current conditions persist, this may be the second worst water year in California’s recorded history.³⁴

The water reductions will be devastating to communities that depend on these Reclamation projects. California experienced a similar drought exacerbated by federal and state environmental regulations in 2012-2015. In 2015 alone, California’s farmers fallowed an estimated 540,000 acres and there were 21,000 unemployed due to a lack of water.³⁵ Such unemployment reached over 40% in parts of the San Joaquin Valley, prompting massive food lines (see Figure 3) for many of the farmworkers who were once employed in fields full of produce.³⁶ There is widespread concern that this scenario will reoccur this year.



Figure 3: Food line in the San Joaquin Valley, 2014. California annually produces 80-90% of the nation’s carrots, but in 2014 local communities had to import carrots from China to feed farmworkers and others in need.

Source: Private citizen

²⁸ MacDougall, Sean A. “Re: FYI - BLM Statement re: Sage-Grouse Plans.” 11 May 2021. E-mail.

²⁹ [Spring Outlook: Drought to persist, expand in U.S. West and High Plains](#)

³⁰ <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

³¹ <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/klamath/teacup.html>

³² <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/#/news-release/3850>

³³ <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/#/news-release/3843>; and <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/#/news-release/3796>

³⁴ <https://www.turnto23.com/news/local-news/portion-of-kern-county-desert-now-classified-as-worst-drought-status>

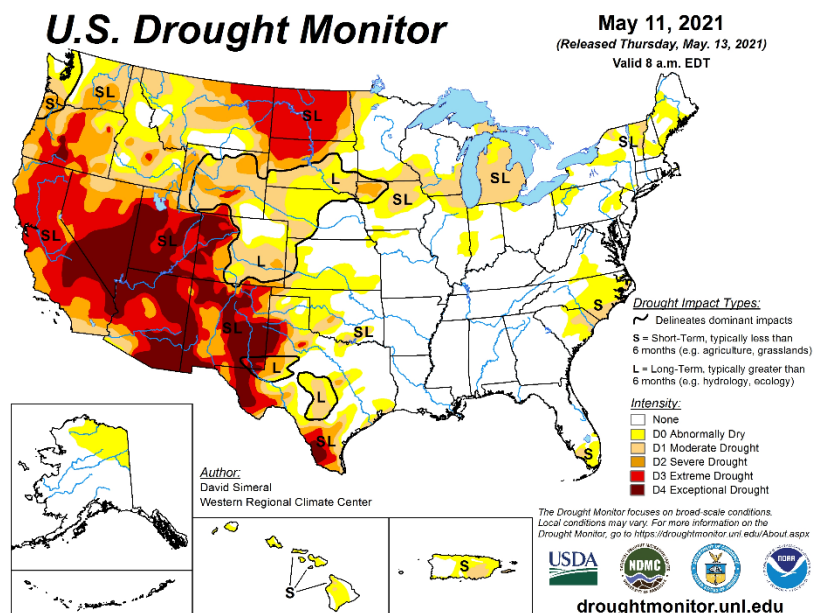
³⁵ https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/files/biblio/Final_Drought%20Report_08182015_Full_Report_WithAppendices.pdf

³⁶ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-02-14/california-drought-threatens-50-farm-town-unemployment>

In the southwest, the Colorado River basin’s decades long drought conditions could mean potential cuts in water deliveries to Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico.³⁷ The system’s largest reservoir, Lake Mead, is currently 37% full and is just 2 feet above an elevation of 1,075 feet — the trigger point for an official shortage declaration by the federal government.³⁸ Arizona gets an estimated 36% of its water from the Colorado River, a large portion of which is for cities, farms and tribal lands. Under the current drought contingency plan and if current conditions persist, Arizona’s expected reductions would constitute about 30% of the Central Arizona Project’s normal supply.³⁹

In South Dakota, about 65% of the state is experiencing drought conditions.⁴⁰ The May 10th weekly crop report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service stated that two-thirds of the topsoil and subsoil in the state is short or very short of moisture.⁴¹ These conditions are expected to continue throughout the summer months.⁴²

Droughts are a contributing factor to wildfires. Dry weather, combined with a buildup of hazardous fuels, can increase the probability of large-scale wildfires. Much of the West’s water supply comes from the rain and snow that falls in mountain headwaters, most of which are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service. Post-fire sediment and debris can threaten the integrity of water and power infrastructure, as well as habitat for protected species.



In response to worsening drought conditions, the White House’s National Climate Advisor, Gina McCarthy, recently directed the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to lead a drought relief Interagency Working Group.⁴³ No details have been released on the working group. While it is unclear what the Biden Administration will do to combat the drought, the

³⁷ <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-environment/2021/04/06/colorado-river-drought-deepens-arizona-prepares-water-cutbacks/4808587001/>

³⁸ <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/hourly/lcTeacups.bmp>

³⁹ <https://new.azwater.gov/sites/default/files/media/CAP-FactSheet-CoRiverShortage-042721.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.drought.gov/states/south-dakota>

⁴¹ [South Dakota Crop Progress and Condition](#)

⁴² <https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/midwest/2021/05/10/613310.htm>

⁴³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/21/readout-of-the-third-national-climate-task-force-meeting/>

Democrat House Majority has been slow to react. In an effort to force action, House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy and the California Republican delegation sent a letter to the House Natural Resources Committee requesting its attention on this critical issue. In addition, Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee Ranking Member Cliff Bentz (R-OR) has repeatedly requested that the Majority focus on this issue. The Democrat Majority finally announced that it would have a drought hearing on May 25, 2021, focused primarily on California. The Republican Forum on Western Drought recognizes that drought is not just a California problem and intends to focus on all the West's needs.⁴⁴

Potential Solutions

The West has experienced drought through millennia and will continue to cope with such circumstances, regardless of the potentially increase in severity. Throughout our nation's history, our engineering forefathers designed and built infrastructure designed to capture water in "wet" years to use later in "normal" and "dry" years in to overcome drought. Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, states, and other entities have led the way in constructing such water storage and delivery facilities.⁴⁵

But, for now, the West must cope with the current severe drought. Congress and the Biden Administration cannot make it rain or snow in the next few months, but there are authorities that can help mitigate some of the impacts in the near term.

At the federal level, the Stafford Act gives the President the authority to declare a major disaster for any natural event, including drought.⁴⁶ A major disaster declaration provides a wide range of federal assistance programs for individuals and public infrastructure, including funds for both emergency and permanent work. Reclamation and agencies within the U.S. Department of Agriculture also have the ability to fund or re-program existing federal funding to help farmers, ranchers, and communities. For example, such efforts are underway in the Klamath basin to help provide some relief in the impacted communities.⁴⁷

Water districts in certain parts of the West also have the ability to purchase water from other sources and then transport that water through Reclamation's canals.⁴⁸ However, this option can be economically problematic for the local community which is exporting the water and there can be environmental regulations stemming from the ESA and other laws that prohibit or delay such transfers.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ P.L.114-322

⁴⁵ <https://www.usbr.gov/history/2011NEWBRIEFHISTORY.pdf> at 2.

⁴⁶ Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq., signed into law November 23, 1988; amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, PL 93-288.

⁴⁷ <https://www.kdrv.com/content/news/Feds-announce-aid-funding-for-Klamath-Basin-farmers-amid-unprecedented-drought-574204641.html>

⁴⁸ <https://cawaterlibrary.net/document/central-valley-project-cvp-water-transfer-program-fact-sheet/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.nap.edu/read/1803/chapter/12#225>

States have assistance measures as well. For example, after prodding from the House California Republican delegation of the House of Representatives⁵⁰, California Governor Gavin Newsom (D) just expanded a drought emergency declaration to include much of the state.⁵¹ In addition, some states have the ability to allow for increased temporary groundwater pumping to supplement surface water shortages. Further, a state such as California has the ability to waive water quality requirements in order to keep more water in reservoirs or deliver the water to human needs instead of using the water to reduce salinity in tidal parts of its bays and rivers.⁵²

While the above short-term measures can help, they are by no means a multi-year solution. During the forum, some Members and witnesses will focus on active forest and rangeland management as one way to provide more water given the direct relationship between land management and watershed health, water quantity and quality.

In addition, many irrigation districts have focused on conserving existing water supplies by concrete-lining or piping canals to avoid water loss through seepage or evaporation.⁵³ Some communities actively recycle their wastewater and use such wastewater for groundwater recharge or for immediate consumptive use.⁵⁴ Other communities have focused on brackish or ocean water desalination facilities to provide supplemental water sources although the cost for these technologies can be relatively higher and there can be permitting and brine-disposal issues.⁵⁵

Most experts agree that it takes a host of measures to help drought-proof a community and that water conservation cannot solve a water crisis in the long-term. Many have pointed out that increased water storage can play a significant long-term role in providing water for multi-parties.

One example is the CVP in California, where many of its reservoirs were in flood control operation for two years because storage capacity was full and most of the releases were not captured for later use.⁵⁶ Some argue that had there been more federal water storage in California at the time, this current drought could have been mitigated with that stored water. Some of the new or expanded reservoirs in California have been at the forefront of the policy debate for decades.⁵⁷

Feasibility studies for many of these facilities were initiated in the 1990's and early 2000's, yet the studies languished until the Trump Administration, which used new authorities under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act, P.L. 114-322, to expedite these

⁵⁰ <https://fox40.com/news/california-connection/lawmakers-urge-newsom-to-declare-drought-related-state-of-emergency/>

⁵¹ <https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/water-and-drought/article251298968.html>

⁵² <https://www.kqed.org/science/13416/california-drought-loosens-some-environmental-rules>

⁵³ <https://www.northkernwsd.com/projects/>

⁵⁴ <https://www.watereducation.org/aquapedia/water-recycling#:~:text=Man%2Dmade%20water%20recycling%2C%20also,of%20wastewater%2C%20and%20save%20energy.>

⁵⁵ <https://e360.yale.edu/features/as-water-scarcity-increases-desalination-plants-are-on-the-rise>

⁵⁶ <https://www.redding.com/story/news/local/2019/04/04/more-rain-means-more-water-being-released-lake-shasta/3365047002/>

⁵⁷ https://www.bakersfield.com/news/momentum-builds-for-public-investment-in-california-water-storage-projects/article_195ea028-41ca-11e9-ae20-1f8d5cf520f2.html

and other studies in order to proceed to potential dam construction or expansion. The last administration finished the studies for storage projects in California, Idaho, and Washington state.⁵⁸ Since the WIIN Act expires on December 31, 2021, legislation has been introduced to help modernize water infrastructure and drought-proof parts of the West.⁵⁹

This forum, the Members, and on-the-ground witnesses will focus on many of the above solutions.

⁵⁸ <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/newsroomold/newsrelease/detail.cfm?RecordID=73365>

⁵⁹ H.R. 737 (Valadao) and H.R. 1563 (Garcia)