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Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act (Public Law 116-260; 134 Stat. 3249)

SEC. 1111. SNOW WATER SUPPLY FORECASTING

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act".

(b) DEFINITION OF PROGRAM.—In this Act, the term "program" means the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program established by subsection (c).

(c) SNOW WATER SUPPLY FORECASTING PROGRAM.—

(1) PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT.—The Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program is hereby established within the Department of the Interior.

(2) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.—To implement the program, the Secretary shall-

(A) develop the program framework in coordination with other Federal agencies pursuant to subsection (d), [culminating in the report required under subsection (d)(3)] with an emphasis on deployment of technologies that provide integration of snowpack measuring and modeling; and

(B) [after submitting the report required by subsection (d)(3),] implement activities to improve snowpack measurement in particular watersheds pursuant to subsection (e).

(d) DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM FRAMEWORK IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) SNOWPACK MEASUREMENT DATA WITH INTEGRATED MODELING.—When determining water supply forecasts or allocations to Federal water contractors, the Secretary, acting through the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, shall incorporate, to the greatest extent practicable, information from [emerging technologies for snowpack measurement, such as] commercially available technologies that provide complete integration of accurate, timely, and spatially complete snowpack measurements and models, including the integration of-

[(A) synthetic aperture radar;

(B) laser altimetry; and

(C) other emerging technologies that the Secretary determines are likely to provide more accurate or timely snowpack measurement data.]

(A) airborne laser altimetry;

(B) airborne imaging spectroscopy;

(C) integrated physics-based snowpack and hydrologic modeling; and

(D) other technologies that the Secretary determines are likely to provide more accurate or timely snowpack measurement data commensurate with operational water management needs.

(2) COORDINATION.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall coordinate data use and collection efforts with other Federal agencies that use or may benefit from the use of emerging technologies for snowpack measurement.

[(3) EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 2021, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that—

(A) summarizes the use of emerging technologies pursuant to this Act;

(B) describes benefits derived from the use of technologies summarized under subparagraph (A) related to the environment and increased water supply reliability; and

(C) describes how Federal agencies will coordinate to implement emerging technologies.]

(e) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTING FRAMEWORK.—[After submitting the report required under subsection (d)(3), the]The Secretary shall participate with program partners in implementing activities to improve snowpack measurement in particular watersheds.

[(2) FOCUS.—The program shall focus on activities that will maintain, establish, expand, or advance snowpack measurement consistent with the report required by subsection (d)(3), with an emphasis on—

(A) enhancing activities in river basins to achieve improved snow and water supply forecasting results;

(B) activities in river basins where snow water supply forecasting related activities described in this Act are not occurring on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(C) demonstrating or testing new, or improving existing, snow and water supply forecasting technology.]

(2) FOCUS.—The program shall focus on activities that will maintain, establish, expand, or advance snowpack measurement and integrated modeling, with an emphasis on—

(A) enhancing activities to achieve improved snow and water supply forecasting results that are more responsive to changing weather and watershed conditions;

(B) real-time integration of activities described in this section with water supply forecasts;

(C) activities in river basins where activities described in this section can produce snow and water supply data to inform water management decisions, including interstate water management decisions; and

(D) building program partners' capacity to implement and adapt to the new measurement and forecast capabilities enabled under this program.

(3) INFORMATION SHARING.—The Secretary may provide information collected and analyzed under this Act to program partners through appropriate mechanisms, including interagency agreements with Federal agencies, States, State agencies, or a combination thereof, leases, contracts, cooperative agreements, grants, loans, and memoranda of understanding.

(4) PROGRAM PARTNERS.—Program partners with whom the Secretary enters into cooperative agreements pursuant to paragraph (5) may include water districts, irrigation districts, water associations, universities, State agencies, other Federal agencies, private sector entities, non-governmental organizations, and other entities, as determined by the Secretary.

(5) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may-

(A) enter into cooperative agreements with program partners to allow the program to be administered efficiently and cost effectively through cost-sharing or by providing additional in-kind resources necessary for program implementation; and

(B) provide nonreimbursable matching funding for programmatic and operational activities under this Act in consultation with program partners.

(6) ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS.—Nothing in this Act shall modify any obligation of the Secretary to comply with applicable Federal and State environmental laws in carrying out this Act.

(f) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment [of this Act] of the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Reauthorization Act of 2025, the Secretary

shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, that includes-

- (1) a list of basins [and sub-basins] for which snowpack measurement [technologies] and integrated modeling technologies are being used under the program, including a description of each [technology used] application, outcome, and data resources used; and
- (2) a list of Federal agencies and program partners participating in each basin [or sub-basin] listed in paragraph (1).

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this Act \$15,000,000[, in the aggregate, for fiscal years 2022 through 2026] for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031.