



**Western Coalition of Arid States
WaterReuse Association
Family Farm Alliance
National Urban Agriculture Council
Association of California Water Agencies
Oregon Water Resources Congress
Upper Missouri Water Association**

October 2, 2001

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Economic Stimulus: Backlog of BOR Projects

Dear Secretary Norton,

The Invest in the West campaign has brought together water providers from across the 17 states served by the Bureau of Reclamation. Our members are anxious for your response to our May 3 letter, in which we cited the 36% decline in the Bureau's budget over the past ten years, and requested your support for a five-year budget restoration of \$1 billion in the Water and Related Resources account. We are hopeful that you have included this plan in your 2003 budget.

At the same time, we are closely following progress on President Bush's economic stimulus plan. In our view, the \$5 billion backlog of authorized BOR projects represents a unique opportunity for the Administration to both stimulate the economy and address the long-term erosion of some of our country's core infrastructure. We urge you to ask for funding for these projects in the economic stimulus plan.

Drought and recession affect all parts of our country, but bring particular hardship for the people of western states. During the last recession of the early 1990s, national unemployment topped out at 7.5 percent, but was higher in states like California (9.3 percent), New Mexico (8.2 percent) and Oregon (7.6 percent). Many of these communities have built their economies around Bureau facilities, and as their populations continue to grow, they must struggle to plan for tomorrow's needs.

By the same token, infrastructure investment and a reliable water supply have also helped unleash the dynamic productive capacity of western states. Water's role in facilitating high technology, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism in western regions helps propel the national economy and creates millions of jobs.

In conclusion, members of the Invest in the West campaign again request your support for a five-year restoration plan beginning with the 2002 Bureau of Reclamation budget, and funding for BOR projects within the Administration's economic stimulus plan. Water is the essential resource in any economy, and can be an important part of this recovery.

Sincerely,

Douglas Karafa, President
Western Coalition of Arid States

Stephen K. Hall, Executive Director
Association of California Water Agencies

G. Wade Miller, Executive Director
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Family Farm Alliance

Michael Dwyer, Executive Director
Upper Missouri Water Association

Roger Waters, President
National Urban Agriculture Council

cc. The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
The Honorable Ted Stevens
The Honorable Kent Conrad
The Honorable Pete Domenici
The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
The Honorable Frank Murkowski
The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable Byron Dorgan
The Honorable Bill Young
The Honorable David Obey
The Honorable Jim Nussle
The Honorable John Spratt
The Honorable James Hansen
The Honorable Nick Rahall
The Honorable Sonny Callahan
The Honorable Pete Visclosky
The Honorable Bill Thomas
The Honorable Ken Calvert