



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

February 25, 2003

The Honorable Don Nickles
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
SD-624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0569

Dear Chairman Nickles,

As members of the Invest in the West Coalition, we are writing with regard to the development of the FY2004 Budget Resolution and draw your attention to efforts to increase the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation FY2004 Budget.

Invest in the West is a collaboration of Western water organizations representing rural and urban interests in the 17 western states who have been working these past two years to increase the Bureau's Water and Related Resources Account to \$1 billion by FY2005.

The report accompanying the Senate Budget resolution last year recommended an increase for the program. Part of the justification for the increase was "to address the increasing backlog in authorized projects, and recommends increasing this funding, given the importance of the Bureau's drinking water and irrigation construction activities."

Further, as noted in the Department of the Interior's FY2004 Budget documents, "The West is experiencing drought conditions of historic proportions, and exploding population base, and an increase of water-dependent, federally protected species. These trends put unprecedented stress on the water supplies in many basins."

The Coalition agrees with these assessments of the challenge facing Reclamation's Water and Related Resources program. As our stakeholders have told us "trends in the Western United States emphatically warn of a period of prolonged and acute water shortage, one that cannot be forestalled without an increased (financial) commitment to the Bureau of Reclamation."

Given the constraints on discretionary spending, we appreciate the very modest budget increase of \$30 million for FY2004 requested by the Bureau of Reclamation. However, our members see the

economic stimulus this program brings, as well as the efforts of Congress in the FY2003 Omnibus appropriations bill, and strongly believe it is imperative to continue on this same path to increase the funding for the Water and Related Resources program.

We hope the Budget Committee will respond to this challenge by having the Budget Resolution recommend an increase in the Bureau of Reclamation's Water and Related Resources Account of \$150 million. As outlined previously, this increase will help make up for the shortfall in the FY2004 request and keep the program on track for addressing water infrastructure investment in the West.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter, and please contact us if we may be of assistance in this effort to adequately fund the Bureau of Reclamation.

Sincerely,

Douglas Karafa, President
Western Coalition of Arid States

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

G. Wade Miller, Executive Director
WateReuse Association

Anita Winkler, Executive Director
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Roger Waters, President
National Urban Agriculture Council

Norm Semanko, Executive Director and
General Counsel
Idaho Water Users Association

Tom Donnelly, Executive Vice President
National Water Resources Association

cc: The Honorable Kent Conrad
Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on the Budget