



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 24, 2003

CONTACT: Peter Carlson
(202) 429-4344

Congress Affirms Value of Western Water Infrastructure, Increases FY 2004 Investment

For the third year in a row, Congress has increased funding for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Water and Related resources (construction) budget over the President's request. The recently approved fiscal year 2004 Energy and Water Appropriations conference report (HR 2754, report 108-357) contains \$857 million for the account, an \$86 million increase over the Administration's original 2004 budget.

In fiscal year 2002, the President requested \$648 million for the Bureau and Congress provided \$763 million. In 2003 the request was \$726 million and Congress appropriated \$813 million, and now for 2004, Congress went \$86 million above the Administration's \$771 million '04 request to \$857 million. These increases have added up to \$288 million more for the construction program that otherwise would not have been appropriated.

"Water users in the western United States are deeply grateful that Congress has recognized the Federal commitment to the Reclamation Program," said Invest in the West Coordinator Peter Carlson. "While budget numbers fluctuate, western water needs have only grown. Congress has agreed with clear evidence that the Bureau's budget needs to be expanded to address western water infrastructure."

Invest in the West has strongly supported this renewed investment in water reuse, rural water programs, drought assistance and desalination research. Together, these types of programs represent the future of water development in the 21st century.

"The Invest in the West Coalition sincerely appreciates the House and Senate Appropriators' recognition of the Reclamation program's importance," said Carlson. "The need to address these issues has been identified by everyone from the General Accounting Office to stakeholders like Invest in the West, to the Department of Interior's own Water 2025 plan released earlier this year. We hope it will make an impact as the Administration develops its 2005 budget."

The Invest in the West Coalition represents thousands of water users in the 17 Western states served by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Coalition is seeking to increase the Bureau's Water and Related Resources account to \$1 billion to address a multi-billion dollar backlog of authorized but unfunded water facilities.

##