



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

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**Western Water Groups React to FY 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill**  
*Ongoing needs will require attention in FY 2004 Plan*

Western water organizations together under the 'Invest in the West' campaign greatly appreciated Congress' continued interest and commitment to the Western water resources program of the Bureau of Reclamation. The recently-passed fiscal year 2003 omnibus appropriations bill will allocate \$813 million for the Bureau's Water and Related Resources (construction) account, an increase of almost \$90 million above the Administration's original FY 2003 request of \$726 million.

"These funds will enable continued headway in addressing record drought, population growth and growing water resource needs in the Western states," said Invest in the West coordinator Peter Carlson. "However, these communities depend on a longstanding federal budget commitment that for ten of the last 12 years has been waning. We are hopeful that these increases can be sustained and improved upon as Congress turns to the FY '04 budget."

With funding from the construction account, the Bureau of Reclamation operates in facilities in 17 Western states that provide drinking water, hydropower, irrigation water and conservation programs. Bureau programs have reliably served Western communities since 1902, including through periods of recent budget cutbacks. Drought planning is a shared Bureau responsibility that has taken on increased relevance in recent years, and an area where Invest in the West is seeking to augment Bureau funds.

"The partnership between the Western states and the Bureau gets water to people and farms by stretching limited resources and using innovative programs," Carlson said. "While federal fiscal constraints will clearly continue to impact federal budgeting, our message has been to show Congress the overwhelming economic and environmental benefits of these programs, not just to the West, but to the entire United States."

According to the National Weather Service, Colorado last year measured its driest calendar year since records began in 1895. Nebraska, Wyoming, and Nevada recorded their third driest year. Last summer, the Palmer Drought Index (a measure of relative soil moisture) in Colorado, Wyoming, and Arizona reached extremes not seen in 100 years. Although recent rain and snow has improved drought indices in parts of the West, this winter's precipitation totals have done little to ease the hydrological drought, with snowpack below normal in nearly every Western state and reservoirs below normal in every Western state. At the same time, the growth that increased western states' populations more than 19 percent between 1990 and 2000 shows no sign of letting up.

In 2002, Invest in the West helped secure a \$115 million increase for the Bureau, progress the coalition will try to build on in future appropriations cycles. Invest in the West is urging Congress to increase the Bureau's water and related resources budget to at least \$1 billion by 2005.

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