

NATIONAL URBAN AGRICULTURE COUNCIL, WESTERN
COALITION OF ARID STATES, OREGON WATER RESOURCES
CONGRESS, EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
“The advocates for the Bureau of Reclamation’s small reclamation loan program”

March 19, 2002

Dear Western Water Policy Leader:

On behalf of the above mentioned organizations, I am writing to provide you with an update on where we stand in our efforts regarding legislative changes for the Bureau of Reclamation’s Small Reclamation Loan Program.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On May 24, 2001, H.R. 1985 was introduced by Mr. Calvert of California which included the proposed changes to the Small Reclamation Loan Program (title II of the bill) that our coalition has been working on for the past several sessions of Congress. Hearings were held on the bill on July 26, 2001. The bill was reported out of Subcommittee on September 13, 2001. On November 1, 2001, Mr. Calvert introduced H.R. 3208, essentially the same bill with respect to our title and the bill was reported out of Committee on November 7, 2001. The report on the bill was filed on February 14, 2002 (H. Report 107-360). The bill was referred to the House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor for review of issues under their jurisdiction. Once complete, the bill will go to the floor of the House of Representatives for consideration sometime in April once the House returns from their Easter Recess.

If you are interested in using this program, we would urge you to contact your Member of Congress and ask that they support the bill when it comes to the House floor. You would be asking that they support H.R. 3208, the Western Water Security Enhancement Act. You can view the bill, the Committee Report and our testimony by going to www.nuac.org. You can also go to www.loc.gov and go to Thomas and print out a copy. Enclosed in this package is a two page description of the provisions in the bill for the Small Reclamation Loan Program, and a copy of the legislative language that was reported out of the Committee, and a copy of how it changes the existing law (sorry for the small print).

U.S. SENATE

Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) introduced S. 1882 “Small Reclamation Water Resources Act of 2001” on December 20, 2001. His bill is the companion bill to Title II of H.R. 3208. This bill was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Because the Senate Energy Committee Members have been consumed by efforts to produce an Energy Bill, no meetings or hearings have taken place in the Subcommittee or Full Committee. We have asked for a hearing on the bill and remain hopeful that it will take place once action is completed on

the Energy bill. This same Committee will also take action on the Senate version of Title 1 of H.R. 3208, S. 1768. We would encourage you to ask your Senators to support S. 1882 as it moves forward in the Senate.

THE FUTURE

Some of us have already started thinking toward the future in terms of this legislation becoming law. One of the requirements under Act will be to produce new guidelines for the new program within 180 days after the date of enactment to carry out the new amendments. A request that we have is for you to consider how your district might use the new program and the types of projects that you might want to develop. This is likely to raise some questions in terms of interpretations of new requirements or what you may or may not have to do with respect to using the new program. We would encourage you to send those questions to NUAC as our WEB address listed earlier, or at the address on this letter. We would like to use these in our efforts to work on the new guidelines for the program as well as to develop some project application examples that you can use once the program is restarted. We would also use these to developed a “most frequently asked questions” list that we can work on providing the answers.

Our approach to thinking about the new guidelines for the new program is to start fresh and not be encumbered by the existing guidelines for the old program that is on the books. This Act will create a new smaller partnership program that didn't exist before, as well as a new loan guarantee program. New thinking, for new times, to do new types of projects is where we are heading with our approach. If you would like to be a part of the effort to write new guidelines, let us know so we can involve you in the new beginning.

Thank you for taking the time and having the interest in this program. We look forward to your continued involvement.

Sincerely,

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Project Manager

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