



January 30, 2020

The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Chairman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Independence & New Jersey Avenues, SE  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Independence & New Jersey Avenues, SE  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for the “FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act”

Dear Chairmen Grijalva and Huffman,

Our organizations represent millions of people who value rivers, which provide important benefits to rural communities, the West’s recreation economy, and fish and wildlife habitat, in addition to providing critical water supplies for cities, irrigated farmland, and tribes. More than 35 million people rely on the Colorado River or its tributaries for their water, and these waters irrigate over five million acres of ranch and farmland, providing food and forage for states across the country. The economic importance of the Colorado has been estimated at over \$1 trillion annually.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tim James, Anthony Evans, and Cary Kelly, [The Economic Importance of the Colorado River to the Basin Region](#), L. William Siedman Research Institute, W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University, 18 December 2014, p. iii.

We applaud your release of the discussion draft of the “FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act” earlier this month. The bill sets out a comprehensive approach to securing critical water supplies while recognizing the need to conserve healthy rivers and the fish and wildlife that depend on them.

The FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act takes a balanced approach to providing 21<sup>st</sup> century western water infrastructure, water supply security, and ecological resiliency. The suite of diverse strategies in Title I to secure water supplies addresses the many challenges that western water managers face. We strongly support expanding water recycling and reuse projects across the West. We recognize the need for additional water storage, and especially appreciate that the bill includes “green infrastructure” strategies (including restoring natural watershed storage functions) alongside traditional surface and ground water approaches. We appreciate the proposed path for additional desalination projects that are carefully designed and executed, and of course support the bill’s provisions for increasing water conservation and upgrading irrigation water-delivery infrastructure. Important to all of these provisions are the bill’s sideboards to minimize or avoid the environmental harm that most new or expanded water infrastructure can cause.

Title II’s focus on better utilization of water management data and improving desalination technology likewise fits the Act’s balanced approach of promoting a suite of water security strategies. We endorse Title III’s provisions for ecosystem protection and restoration because these strategies will produce dividends, in terms of both increasing the drought-resiliency of watersheds of the Colorado River and across the West, and, of increasing the economic, social and recreational benefits that healthy rivers provide.

We thank you for your thoughtful drafting of the FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act. We look forward to working with you, your staff, and other Members to refine and move this important legislative package into law.

Yours sincerely,

AMERICAN RIVERS  
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP  
TROUT UNLIMITED