

February 7, 2020

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Chairman of the House Water, Power, and Oceans Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
1406 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Huffman,

On behalf of the Columbia Basin Development League (League) we are submitting comments for the proposed FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act of 2020.

Since 1964, the League has supported the Columbia Basin Project, which delivers essential water supplies in eastern Washington State. The League is made up of farmers, businesses, civic and economic groups, and individuals who recognize the value of the Bureau of Reclamation's Columbia Basin Project and the need for infrastructure investment for continued Project development. We are dedicated to the rehabilitation and improvement of Columbia Basin Project water supply facilities.

The League strongly supports Section 106, which provides \$100 million for the WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grant Program. However, there are concerns regarding NGOs eligibility for WaterSMART grants. We are concerned that the extension of funds to NGOs could further limit valuable resources available for existing projects.

In efforts to secure additional water resources, the League supports Section 101. Irrigators within the Columbia Basin use about 2.5 million acre-feet of Columbia River water each year. Re-using water gives irrigators an additional one million acre-feet. The re-use of water is vital to our irrigators and we encourage robust funding for water recycling programs.

Further, the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) seeks to use renewable surface water from the Columbia River to replace the depleting ground water in the Odessa Aquifer. Ample funding for renewable water and recharge projects will be vital in moving forward with the OGWRP. We ask that you keep this in mind as language for the bill is finalized and introduced.

Finally, the League would like to express support for Section 402. Like this bill acknowledges, the water sector needs to address looming "brain drain" and we are supportive of efforts by Congress to maintain a vibrant workforce for years to come.

The additional resources provided in this bill will be beneficial to the Columbia Basin Project and the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation.

Should you have any questions or would like additional information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Mark Stedman, Board Chair



Vicky Scharlau, Executive Director

Since 1964, the League has provided support for the Columbia Basin Project and its future development. We protect its water rights and educate the public on the renewable resource and multiple-purpose benefits of the Project.

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