

FUTURE Western Water Infrastructure and Drought Resiliency Act
Section-by-Section Summary

Title I—INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 101: Competitive Grant Program for the Funding of Water Recycling and Reuse Projects: Incorporates Rep. Napolitano’s Water Recycling Investment and Improvement Act (H.R. 1015) to support a competitive grant program for water recycling projects.

- Raises the Title XVI water recycling program funding authorization to \$500 million through 2025 to support the creation of approximately 650,000 acre-feet of water each year in additional average yield.
- Raises the \$20 million federal funding cap for individual Title XVI water recycling projects to \$30 million.

Sec. 102: Storage Project Development Reports to Congress: Establishes an authorization process for major water storage projects owned or supported by the Department of the Interior. The process is modeled on the existing process used to authorize U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water projects through the biannual Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) process.

Sec. 103: Funding for Storage and Supporting Projects: Authorizes \$750 million for multi-benefit water storage projects, including surface and groundwater storage projects, that provide both water supply reliability benefits and fish and wildlife enhancement benefits. New authorization is also provided for natural water storage projects that use natural materials to increase aquifer recharge or floodplain water storage, and for watershed restoration projects that improve water supply reliability.

Sec. 104: Extension of Existing Requirements for Grandfathered Storage Projects: Extends the existing federal storage project approval process under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act for several water storage projects that have partially advanced under the WIIN project approval process.

Sec. 105: Desalination Project Development: Incorporates Rep. Levin’s Desalination Development Act to support a competitive grant program for water desalination projects. The bill raises the existing desalination program funding authorization to \$260 million through 2026 to support the creation of approximately 100,000 acre-feet of water each year in additional average yield.

Sec. 106: Assistance for Disadvantaged Communities without Adequate Drinking Water: Authorizes \$100 million for a new Bureau of Reclamation grant program to help underserved communities facing significant declines in drinking water quantity or quality. Funding can be used for a variety of drinking water relief activities, including to help households connect to existing water distribution facilities and to pay for emergency drinking water supply projects.

Sec. 107: Water Infrastructure Fund: Establishes a Water Infrastructure Fund to pay for long-term water infrastructure and drought response needs. Beginning in 2032, the Fund would receive \$300 million each fiscal year from revenues that would otherwise be deposited into the Reclamation Fund. The Reclamation Fund was established to support western water projects and now has a surplus of more than \$17 billion because of insufficient congressional appropriations from the Reclamation Fund. The following new infrastructure investments would be made each year:

- \$100 million per year for Title XVI water recycling and reuse projects
- \$100 million per year for cooperative watershed management and WaterSMART water-use efficiency projects
- \$100 million per year for Bureau of Reclamation dam safety projects

Title II—IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

Sec. 201: Reauthorization of Water Availability and Use Assessment Program: Amends and reauthorizes funding for the National Water Availability and Use Assessment Program. Directs the U.S. Geological Survey to evaluate national water availability trends in reuse and desalination. Reauthorizes appropriations for grants to improve states' water data and expands eligibility to Tribes. Allows states and Tribes to apply for additional funding after five years instead of having a permanent cap in grant funding awards to encourage continued data collection from states and Tribes.

Sec. 202: Modifications to Income Exclusion for Conservation Subsidies: Incorporates section 305 of Rep. Thompson's H.R. 848 to expand the income tax exclusion for homeowners who receive rebates from water utilities to purchase and install water conservation systems in residential homes.

Sec. 203: X-Prize for Water Technology Breakthroughs: Establishes an expanded "X-Prize" for the development of new water technologies, including technological advances in water desalination and water reuse and recycling.

Sec. 204: Study Examining Sediment Transport: Directs the National Academy of Sciences to examine existing science and management guidance for the transport of sediment flows and to identify future research areas and recommendations related to modeling and quantifying sediment flows.

Sec. 205: Federal Priority Streamgages: Directs the Department of the Interior to make all streamgages identified by the U.S. Geological Survey as "Federal Priority Streamgages" operational within 10 years. Authorizes appropriations to achieve this directive.

Sec. 206: Study Examining Climate Vulnerabilities at Federal Dams: Directs the National Academy of Sciences to study the impact of climate change on the safety of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation dams and identify the dams most vulnerable to climate-related safety risks in upcoming years.

Sec. 207: Innovative Technology Adoption: Directs the Department of the Interior to include some grant funding priority to help facilitate the adoption of certain priority water technologies, where appropriate. Priority technologies include those that address water loss from pipelines, real-time weather and reservoir operations monitoring, real-time groundwater and water infrastructure monitoring, and water-use efficiency improvements.

Sec. 208: Forecast-Informed Water Control Manual Updates: Directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to update Water Control Manuals to improve water operations based on modern weather forecasting technology.

Title III—ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

Sec. 301: Waterbird Habitat Creation Program: Establishes a grant program to provide voluntary incentives to farmers to create temporary habitat by flooding farmlands at crucial times for bird migration, including along the Pacific Flyway.

Sec. 302: Competitive Grant Program for the Funding of Watershed Health Projects: Directs the Department of the Interior to establish a grant program for habitat restoration projects in the western states, including projects that restore native species, protect against invasive species, and enhance commercial and recreational fishing.

Sec. 303: Support for Refuge Water Deliveries: Directs the Department of the Interior to prepare a report on impediments to compliance with required water deliveries to wildlife refuges in California's Central Valley. Also requires the development of an ecological monitoring and evaluation program for Central Valley wildlife refuges and the development of a construction priority list for the completion of conveyance construction projects at wildlife habitat areas. Authorizes \$25 million to carry out this section and to provide for adequate staffing to advance the refuge water supply delivery objectives.

Sec. 304: Drought Planning and Preparedness for Critically Important Fisheries: Directs federal agencies to develop proactive plans to sustain the survival of commercially and recreationally important fisheries, ESA-listed fish, and important tribal fisheries during future droughts in the western states without affecting any obligation under federal or state environmental law. Provides a list of proactive strategies that should be investigated and authorizes funding for fish, stream, and hatchery activities related to fish recovery efforts.

Sec. 305: Reauthorization of the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act of 2000: Authorizes \$25 million through 2028 for fish passage projects under the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act to support voluntary fish screen and passage projects in Oregon, Washington, California, Montana, and Idaho.

Sec. 306: Combating water theft for illegal marijuana cultivation: Directs several federal agencies to develop a plan to address illegal water diversions for marijuana cultivation in California and other drought-prone states. Creates a structure for funding remediation of trespass marijuana grow sites that threaten to impact watersheds and water quality.

Sec. 307: Sustaining biodiversity during droughts: Directs the Bureau of Reclamation to analyze drought impacts on native biodiversity in major western river basins and to consider and develop strategies to help sustain native biodiversity during future droughts.

Title IV—WATER JOB TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Sec. 401: Water Resource Education: Authorizes the Department of the Interior to provide financial assistance and support for water education activities, including activities to foster cooperation in addressing water resources and management challenges and to provide training for the professional development of legal and technical professionals in the water sector.

Sec. 402: Water Sector Career Grant Programs: Directs the Department of the Interior to establish a grant program for water sector career training. Authorizes \$10 million annually through 2026 to address water industry concerns about a looming “brain drain” in the water sector and help train the next generation of water managers.

Title V—MISCELLANEOUS

Sec. 501: Offset: Establishes a one-time process to identify and deauthorize inactive Bureau of Reclamation water projects where no application for federal funding has been received and no construction has occurred in the previous 10 years. Project sponsors would have the opportunity to provide notice of intent to initiate construction of the project to forestall deauthorization. The deauthorization process is closely modeled on a deauthorization process used for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water projects.