

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the undersigned parties, we thank you for your unwavering leadership and continued commitment to addressing the massive consequences caused by the recent COVID-19 outbreak by passing legislation to address and mitigate for this emergency. As you have stated, an important step in combating the long-term impacts of the pandemic is going to be a renewed effort to meet the systemic infrastructure demands of the nation. We strongly agree. In particular, we urge you to advance critically needed investments that address the shortcomings of our aging Western water infrastructure.

We represent thousands of Western farmers, ranchers and businesses on millions of acres of productive land who provide the food our nation relies upon, as well as many of the public agencies who supply water to Western urban, suburban and rural farms and residents. Our members feel the impacts of crumbling infrastructure virtually on a daily basis. Therefore, we believe it is vital that improving Western water related infrastructure, an area to which your administration has shown a strong commitment, be high on the list of priorities the administration and Congress address at this critical time.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of safety and stability provided by domestic food production. As this crisis has pointed out, a stable domestic food supply is essential and of national security interest. For farmers and ranchers to survive, and for food to continue to be produced here in the American West, a stable water supply is a necessary part of any conversation about our national food security.

As a result, we believe it is critical that our country continually invest in the Western water infrastructure necessary to meet current and future demands. Our existing water infrastructure in the West is aging and in need of rehabilitation and improvement. Most of the federally funded water infrastructure projects that benefit the large cities, rural communities and small farms in the West were built over 50 years ago. As hydrological conditions in the West change and populations continue to expand, failure to address water security has become increasingly critical. Failing to improve water infrastructure and develop supplies will inevitably result in additional conflict as pressure grows to 'solve' urban and environmental water shortages. Moving water away from Western irrigated agriculture will surely contribute to the decline of our national food security.

Our organizations collectively believe that water conservation, water recycling, watershed management, conveyance, desalination, water transfers, groundwater storage, and surface storage are all needed for a diversified water management portfolio and such efforts MUST be included in the next stimulus package.

- Water conservation, one of the most cost-effective actions that can positively affect water supply stability, needs to continue to be aggressively pursued in conjunction with new water storage and other actions.

- Additional funding will be needed to kick-start new water recycling, reuse and desalination projects currently being studied or that are ready for construction, either through the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016 and other funding authorities.
- Programs that fund water conservation and management improvements, fish passage, and habitat restoration - all in support of water project operations in the Reclamation states of the West - need additional funding to accelerate construction of this ready-to-go infrastructure.
- We need new water storage – both surface water and groundwater – in order to adapt to a changing hydrology and develop usable and sustainable supplies to meet growing demands for water. Water storage projects should be tailored to local circumstances and need. This means in some cases projects will be constructed above ground and others below ground. Some projects will be traditional construction and others green infrastructure, dependent on the wide variety of local needs.
- The federal government must remain an active partner and expand its involvement in finding 21<sup>st</sup> century solutions to water problems in the West either through direct funding to help meet these needs or by developing and expanding federal financing mechanisms that have a very low cost to the Treasury and to taxpayers. There is a need for additional federal funding for loans from the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to non-federal irrigation districts responsible for operating, maintaining and rehabilitating federally owned infrastructure (under P.L. 111-11 authorities). These local operating entities need immediate funding and financing for extraordinary repairs and rehabilitation on their federally owned canals and water delivery structures. Most, if not all of these major construction projects are ready to proceed if direct financing was made available. Unfortunately, these operating entities have very few if any affordable financing options available. In short, water resource infrastructure investments in rehabilitating these aging federal projects should be made more attractive and affordable for these non-federal districts who operate and maintain this critical federally owned water delivery infrastructure.
- Similar funding and financing tools should be made available to commence construction on permitted and approved water storage and supply infrastructure. The WIIN Act made funding available to help non-federal entities plan, design and construct new water supply infrastructure at both federal and non-federally owned facilities. New financing tools like the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) can also work to finance some non-federally led construction on new and existing water supply and delivery projects. Any existing and additional funding could be made available immediately to kick-start these worthy projects that have already been approved by Reclamation and the Congress.

Beyond monetary assistance, the federal government should also continue to bring forward policy changes that help ensure that water projects are built in a timely fashion. Making funding and financing available for projects is useless if projects take decades to be approved and permitted. In the past, this administration has put forward significant efforts to streamline and improve environmental regulation and permitting processes. Any infrastructure package should include a continued commitment to streamline the development of water projects.

Finally, in order to respond to current and future water shortages, we applaud your administration in providing federal agencies with more flexibility under existing environmental laws and regulations to encourage a more cooperative approach toward achieving multiple goals. And, where such flexibility currently exists in law, we appreciate that your administration has directed federal agencies to use those flexibilities to act with the urgency and promptness that this crisis demands.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it is imperative that your administration continue its strong support for the economic livelihood of so many of our members, especially at this moment in time. This can be achieved through your continued efforts to work with Congress on any future infrastructure economic stimulus package. Such legislation should not only address our nation's chronic needs surrounding roads, bridges and airports, but it should also focus on our aging water infrastructure, upon which Western farms, ranches, cities and towns rely. If and when additional infrastructure funding is discussed as part of a larger economic stimulus package, we need your help in making sure that federal dollars flow to the urgent water infrastructure needs mentioned above in this letter.

We look forward to working with you to address this critical need and national security interest.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Erin Huston (California Farm Bureau Federation - [ehuston@cfbf.com](mailto:ehuston@cfbf.com)), Dan Keppen (Family Farm Alliance – [dan@familyfarmalliance.org](mailto:dan@familyfarmalliance.org)) or Dennis Nuxoll (Western Growers Association - [dnuxoll@wga.com](mailto:dnuxoll@wga.com)).

Sincerely,

African American Farmers of California  
American Pistachio Growers  
Arizona Farm Bureau Federation  
Association of California Egg Farmers  
Association of Oregon Counties  
Bitter Root Irrigation District (MT)  
California Agricultural Irrigation Association  
California Apple Commission  
California Bean Shippers Association  
California Blueberry Commission  
California Cherry Growers and Industry Association  
California Cotton Alliance  
California Farm Bureau Federation  
California Grain and Feed Association  
California Pork Producers Association  
California State Beekeepers Association  
California Warehouse Association  
California Wool Growers Association  
California Women for Agriculture  
Central Arizona Irrigation and Drainage District  
Central California Irrigation District  
Charleston Drainage District (CA)  
Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association  
Colorado Wool Growers Association  
Del Puerto Water District (CA)  
Dolores Water Conservancy District (CO)

Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona  
Arizona Cotton Growers  
Arnold Irrigation District (OR)  
Association of California Water Agencies  
Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries  
Byron-Bethany Irrigation District (CA)  
California Alfalfa and Forage Association  
California Association of Wheat Growers  
California Blueberry Association  
California Cattlemen's Association  
California Citrus Mutual  
California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association  
California Fresh Fruit Association  
California Pear Growers Association  
California Seed Association  
California Sweetpotato Council  
California Water Alliance  
California Wild Rice Advisory Board  
Carlsbad Irrigation District (NM)  
Central Oregon Irrigation District  
Central Valley Project Water Association (CA)  
Colorado Farm Bureau  
Colorado River District (CO)  
Columbia Basin Development League (WA)  
Deschutes Basin Board of Control (OR)  
Eagle Field Water District (CA)

Eldorado County Water Agency (CA)  
 Elephant Butte Irrigation District (NM)  
 Farmers Conservation Alliance (CA/MT/NV/OR)  
 Far West Equipment Dealers Association (CA)  
 Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (ND)  
 (NE/WY)Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District (CA)  
 Grassland Basin Authority (CA)  
 California Grower-Shipper Association of  
     Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties (CA)  
 (CA)Idaho Farm Bureau Federation  
 Imperial Irrigation District (CA)  
 Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District (KS)  
 Kern County Water Agency (CA)  
 Kittitas County Timothy Hay Growers & Suppliers  
 Kittitas Reclamation District (WA)  
 Little Snake River Conservation District (WY)  
 Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project (MT)  
 Milk Producers Council (CA)  
 Modesto Irrigation District (CA)  
 Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (CA)  
 Nebraska State Irrigation Association  
 New Magma Irrigation and Drainage District (AZ)  
 Nevada Farm Bureau Federation  
 North Dakota Irrigation Association  
 Northeast Oregon Water Association  
 North Platte Valley Irrigators Association (NE)  
 Ochoco Irrigation District (OR)  
 Olive Oil Commission of California  
 Oregon Association of Nurseries  
 Oregon Dairy Farmers Association  
 Oregon Forest Industries Council  
 Oregon Women for Agriculture  
 Pacific Seed Association  
 Panoche Water District (CA)  
 Pershing County Water Conservation District (NV)  
 Pothook Water Conservancy District (CO)  
 Reclamation District 108 (CA)  
 Roza Irrigation District (WA)  
 Salt River Project (AZ)  
 San Luis Water District (CA)  
 Sargent Irrigation District (NE)  
 Electrical District No. 3 of Pinal County (AZ)  
 Family Farm Alliance (WEST-WIDE)  
 Farwell Irrigation District (NE)  
 Friant Water Authority (CA)  
 Gering-Ft. Laramie Irrigation District  
 Goshen Irrigation District (WY)  
 Grower-Shipper Association of Central  
 Hawaii Farm Bill Federation  
 Henry Miller Reclamation District #2131  
 Idaho Water Users Association  
 Imperial Valley  
     Vegetable Growers Association (CA)  
 Kings River Conservation District (CA)  
 Kittitas County Farm Bureau (WA)  
 Klamath Water Users Association (CA /OR)  
 Lone Pine Irrigation District (OR)  
 Mercy Springs Water District (CA)  
 Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation & Drainage Dist.(AZ)  
 Montana Water Resources Association  
 Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District (ID)  
 Nebraska Water Users Association  
 New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau  
 Nisei Farmers League (CA)  
 North Dakota Water Users Association  
 Northern California Water Association  
 North Unit Irrigation District (OR)  
 Olive Growers Council of California  
 Oregon Association of Conservation Districts  
 Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
 Oregon Farm Bureau  
 Oregon Water Resources Congress  
 Pacheco Water District (CA)  
 Panoche Drainage District (CA)  
 Pathfinder Irrigation District (NE / WY)  
 Plant California Alliance  
 Queen Creek Irrigation District (AZ)  
 River Garden Farms (CA)  
 Roza Sunnyside Board of Joint Control (WA)  
 San Carlos Irrigation & Drainage District (AZ)  
 San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (CA)  
 San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors  
     Water Authority (CA)

Savery – Little Snake River	Sites Project Authority (CA)
Water Conservancy District (WY)	South Columbia Basin Irrigation District (WA)
Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District	South Valley Water Association (CA)
Southwestern Water Conservation District (CO)	Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District (WA)
Swalley Irrigation District (OR)	Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority (CA)
Three Sisters Irrigation District (OR)	Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (NV)
Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District (CA)	Tumalo Irrigation District (OR)
United Water Conservation District (CA)	Utah Farm Bureau Federation
Utah Water Users Association	Ventura County Agricultural Association (CA)
Washington State Farm Bureau	Washington State Potato Commission
Washington State Water Resources Association	Western Growers Association (AZ/CA/CO/NM)
Western Agricultural Processors Association (CA)	Western Plant Health Association (CA)
West Stanislaus Irrigation District (CA)	Whitehead H2O (CO)
Yuba Water Agency (CA)	Yuma County Water Users Association (AZ)

cc:     The Honorable David Bernhardt, Secretary, Department of Interior  
          The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary, Department of Agriculture  
          The Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary, Department of Commerce  
          The Honorable Andrew Wheeler, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency