



Association of California Water Agencies
Leadership Advocacy Information *Since 1910*



December 19, 2008

Mr. David Hayes
Energy and Natural Resources Team Lead
Obama-Biden Transition Team
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Hayes;

We are writing in support of including the following initiatives in the stimulus bill:

- Bureau of Reclamation's Water Recycling Program, Title XVI
- Army Corps emergency preparedness activities and levee maintenance
- Department of Interior ecosystem restoration projects
- Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Service Program for Water and Environment
- Bureau of Reclamation Water Conservation Field Service Program
- Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund

The Bureau of Reclamation's Water Recycling and Reuse Program, known as Title XVI, funds recycling and reuse projects throughout the West. In the Western U.S., drought, population growth, increasing climate variability, and ecosystem needs make managing water supplies especially challenging. Water reuse projects provide a valuable source of water and help alleviate conflicts. These projects are a sound and critical investment in creating jobs, addressing drought concerns and helping local economies.

In California, water recycling projects throughout the state help to reduce dependence on imported water from both the Lower Colorado River and Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta. In the San Gabriel Basin and elsewhere, these projects are also designed to clean up contaminated groundwater. There are an estimated \$500 million worth of projects throughout the State that could begin within 120 days of receiving funds. Nationally, the Bureau of Reclamation estimates a \$655 million backlog in funding for 45 projects across nine western states. Estimates indicate these types of water construction projects generate between 30,000-40,000 jobs per billion invested.

We also support funding the Army Corps of Engineers emergency preparedness activities and levee maintenance in the stimulus bill. In conjunction, additional funds should be available for the Department of Interior to conduct ecosystem restoration projects. In

California, Governor Schwarzenegger established the Delta Vision Task Force to develop a comprehensive vision for Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta (Delta). As part of this process, approximately \$500,000,000 million worth of near term projects to help stabilize the Delta were developed and can be completed within 24 months generating 10,000 jobs. Additionally, the task force identified several restoration projects that should be funded through the Department of Interior. Some of these projects could be undertaken immediately, others could be completed within 24 months. Two such projects are the Cosumnes River and Dutch Slough restoration projects.

We also support, the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utility Service Program for Water and Environment. This program offers assistance to small public water and sewer systems serving less than 10,000 people in the form of low interest loans and grants; it can be used for water, wastewater, and storm water projects. Nationally, there is a \$3 billion backlog of eligible projects. It is estimated that clearing out this \$3 billion backlog would create 36,000 jobs.

Additionally, we support funding the Bureau of Reclamation's Water Conservation Field Service Program in the stimulus bill. This program promotes water conservation projects by providing technical and financial assistances to water agencies. Programs like this one help improve water use efficiency and alleviate water conflicts in the West.

Finally, we also support investment in the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds. Nationally, more than \$10 billion worth of "shovel ready" projects for both revolving funds have been identified, including more than \$2 billion of multi-benefit green water resource infrastructure projects, that could start within 120 days of receiving funds. Within the next two years, more than \$40 billion worth of safe drinking water and clean water projects could begin. We support having 15% of the SRF funds available for 0% interest loans with principal forgiveness for green water resource infrastructure projects. Estimates indicate that water design, construction, and maintenance projects generate between 30,000-40,000 jobs per billion invested.

Thank you for considering these requests. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Timothy Quinn
Executive Director
Association of California Water
Agencies



Barry Nelson
Western Water Project Director
Natural Resources Defense Council