

American Rivers Environmental Defense Fund National Audubon Society
The Nature Conservancy Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited

June 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-222, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-107, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer:

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 40 million people in seven states 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 across the country. Reservoirs in the Colorado River Basin, filled to the brim at the end of the 20th Century, are at historic lows due to a 19-year drought and growing demands. Diminished stream flows now pose serious challenges for cities, farms, wildlife, and recreation. The economic importance of the Colorado River has been estimated at over \$1 trillion annually.

We support the House Infrastructure Bill's (The Moving Forward Act, H.R. 2) inclusion of Sections 81201—81252 (the FUTURE Drought Resiliency Subtitle) and Sections 81301—81335, which mirrors the Western Water Security Act (H.R. 4891/S. 2718). The FUTURE Western Water and Drought Resiliency Subtitle, primarily authored by Rep. Huffman, sets out a balanced approach to providing 21st century western water infrastructure, water supply security, and ecological resiliency. 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. The bill also includes measures to minimize or avoid the environmental harm that most new or expanded water infrastructure can cause.

The Western Water Security Act, authored by Rep. Torres Small, would reauthorize vital programs that address the ongoing western drought, including the Cooperative Watershed Management program. H.R. 4891 focuses on efficiency, conservation, and emergency drought funding and will help the region adjust to shifts in water availability and the changing climate.

Thank you for your leadership to rebuild America's infrastructure and we strongly support the inclusion of the FUTURE Western Water and Drought Resiliency Subtitle and the Western Water Security Act in H.R. 2.

Sincerely,

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