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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** SLDMWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
**FROM:** DAN KEPPEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**SUBJECT:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT  
**DATE:** JUNE 6, 2022

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This memo is intended to keep you apprised as to what is happening behind the scenes on policy issues the Family Farm Alliance is engaged in. In the past month, much of our efforts have focused on engaging in Biden Administration rulemaking efforts, monitoring federal agency implementation of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, working with Congressional staff on hearings and draft legislation, and expanding public outreach associated with global food insecurity and the importance of Western irrigated agriculture. These issues and other matters important to our members are further discussed in this memo.

### **UKRAINE, INFLATION, DROUGHT AND GLOBAL FOOD INSECURITY**

Americans are facing rising food costs and global famine looms on the horizon. Meanwhile, our own government has voluntarily withheld water from producers in places like the Central Valley, Central Oregon and the Klamath Basin.

Inflation barreled ahead at 8.3% in April compared to a year ago, with more upstream pressure expected to come from accelerating housing rents, and crude oil and producer price increases. Numerous experts predicted a recession in the next 12-18 months (Economy and Infrastructure Newsletter, May 2022). The World Bank believes Russia's invasion of Ukraine may drive 40 million additional people worldwide into extreme poverty and food insecurity this year. The White House, eager to avoid the criticism it has received for the administration's delayed response to the baby formula shortage, is now making bold statements about how it intends to tackle the "greatest global food security crisis of our time". Secretary of State Antony Blinken recently said this is a crisis that "we all know has been building for years". Little has been said by the Biden Administration as to how federal policies may be adversely impacting our own

producers and their abilities to help feed the world. Instead, the Administration says the looming food shortages are caused by the pandemic, an accelerating climate crisis, and Russia's invasion.

The Western drought continues, with no real federal policy action other than to limit irrigation supplies to farmers and residents. Major reservoirs in California and along the Colorado River have reached or are approaching historic lows, threatening the ability to generate hydropower, particularly at Lake Powell, behind Glen Canyon Dam. In the Rio Grande Basin, New Mexico's Elephant Butte Reservoir is less than 13% full. Our farmers that are largely responsible for keeping the nation's produce aisles stocked are being forced to leave fields fallow or reduce livestock herds.

Ferocious winds helped drive and spread the second-largest wildfire on record in New Mexico. Wildfires have already burned more than a million acres of land in the U.S. this year and the months ahead present significant fire potential to all or parts of more than a dozen states. Areas where multiple large wildfires are already burning – including parts of the Southwest, Rocky Mountains and Plains – remain at the greatest risk heading into summer due to ongoing drought and abundant fire fuels such as dried out vegetation, according to the latest wildfire outlook released last month by the National Interagency Fire Center.

The Nebraska legislature has invoked a nearly century-old compact which it claims allows the state to take Colorado land to secure water from the South Platte River. If Nebraska claims the water under the compact, that means reduced crop yields and impacts to Colorado farming.

As you well know, California is once again in the middle of a punishing drought with state leaders telling people to take shorter showers and do fewer loads of laundry to conserve water. Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is requiring member agencies that depend on water from the State Water Project to implement one-day-a-week watering restrictions, or live within volumetric limits, starting June 1. Yet at the same time, many of the same elected officials, pledging to solve the housing crisis, are pushing for the construction of millions of new homes (*Los Angeles Times*).

To end on an optimistic note, recent discoveries have been made of deep aquifers under Antarctic Ice, and in Southwest Texas. The US National Groundwater Association estimates there is 6,000 years of freshwater supply in the upper two kilometers of the earth's crust, according to a *Nature Geoscience* article. New technologies suggest there is potential to locate and economically produce these untapped water resources.

## **BIDEN ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPMENTS**

### **1. National Infant Formula Shortage**

Amid concerns of higher food prices and growing concerns of a looming global wheat shortage, the recent national infant formula shortage has further underscored the importance of a strong national domestic food supply system. The recent baby formula crisis seems to be coming as a

major shock to many in the country right now. This is hitting an extremely important demographic and may be opening the eyes of many to broader messages about root causes.

Republicans are loudly blaming President Joe Biden for the shortage, claiming it's part of the fallout from his economic policies — and that his administration — particularly the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) — was too slow to act. According to POLITICO, White House and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials have privately complained about the FDA's decision not to warn other parts of the administration earlier, while allowing the situation to grow into a food security crisis for American families and a political crisis for President Joe Biden, just months ahead of the November midterms.

The White House, meanwhile, is scrambling to help ramp up production. President Biden late last month invoked the Defense Production Act to address the infant formula shortage in the United States. The White House announced in a fact sheet that the president would use the law to require suppliers to “direct needed resources to infant formula manufacturers before any other customer who may have ordered that good.” USDA is encouraging state agencies and their infant formula manufacturers to consider seeking temporary flexibility in their infant formula contracts to allow Women, Children and Infants (WIC) program participants to purchase alternate sizes, forms, or brands of infant formula during the current shortage. In Congress, the House of Representatives passed a \$28 million bill in emergency funding to address baby formula shortage, although the legislation faces an uphill battle in the Senate.

The nationwide shortage of baby formula following the shutdown of a single Abbott Labs production facility, empty grocery shelves during early phases of the Covid pandemic and soaring food prices over the past year have underscored weaknesses in the country's food supply chains (*Bloomberg*). Grocery prices in April were up 10.8% from a year earlier, the highest annual increase since November 1980, when Jimmy Carter was in the White House.

## **2. Global Food Security Initiative**

Secretary of State Blinken was in New York last week to convene a high-level UN Food Security Ministerial to marshal the global effort that is needed to address it. His four suggestions to “save lives now” and “address the long-term drivers of this problem” include:

- Encourage other countries to step up with substantial new contributions to fill the gaps faced by humanitarian organizations and agencies (e.g., World Food Program, Food and Agriculture Organization, UNICEF) that are battling food insecurity.
- Address the global fertilizer shortage by creating incentives for countries to produce more fertilizer as the United States is doing and helping farmers maximize fertilizer efficiency learning from advances made by countries like Ethiopia.
- Increase investments in agricultural capacity and resilience, like what the U.S. is doing through its [Feed the Future program](#), which will invest \$5 billion in more than 35 countries over five years.

- Help poor and vulnerable populations bear the impact of this crisis, using the [International Financial Institution Action Plan to Address Food Insecurity](#), which was released prior to the G7 financial ministerial.

For their part, American farmers should “be willing to shoulder added risk,” Secretary Blinken said, citing President Biden’s recent trip to a family farm in Illinois, where he encouraged farmers to double crop, harvesting two crops from the same field in the same year. The president pledged to provide additional insurance for American farmers who are willing to give that a try.

### **3. White House Action Plan on Global Water Security**

Vice President Kamala Harris apparently believes the current administration has a handle on water challenges, too, and last week launched the [White House Action Plan on Global Water Security](#), which Sec. Blinken calls “a landmark whole-of-government effort to achieve a water-secure world”. While this administration’s federal water policy is voluntarily holding back water from some of the world’s best producers in the Vice President’s home state, the White House apparently feels emboldened to “advance United States leadership on water security.” The State Department is updating the U.S. Global Water Strategy, which outlines a “whole-of-government approach” to create a more water-secure world, where people and nations have the water they need to be healthy, prosperous, and resilient. Vice President Harris’ plan elevates water security as an essential element of the US’s “international efforts to achieve national security objectives that include increasing equity and economic growth,” as well as:

- Decreasing the risk of vulnerability to shocks, conflict and instability;
- Building inclusive and resilient societies;
- Bolstering health and food security;
- Advancing gender equity and equality; and
- Tackling climate change.

There is a lot of talk in this initiative about lead pipes being poisonous, etc. but very little talk about agriculture and food security and zero mention made of the incredible regulatory challenges facing Western U.S. producers who once received reliable water from federal water projects.

In addition to these globally-focused efforts announced by the Biden Administration last week, federal departments also laid out plans last week to address food supply chain challenges in our own country.

### **4. USDA: Framework for Shoring Up the Food Supply Chain**

USDA on June 1 rolled out details of a framework to transform the food system to benefit consumers, producers and rural communities by providing more options, increasing access, and creating new, more, and better markets for small and mid-size producers. The Biden Administration says this strategy builds on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and

supply chain disruptions caused by Russia's war in Ukraine. USDA's newly announced Food System Transformation framework targets four aspects of the food supply: production, processing, distribution and markets.

The nation's meat processing capability has been a primary focus since the pandemic, in part because of the industry's consolidation over the years. The top four meatpacking companies control 85% of the beef market, 70% of the pork and more than 50% of the chicken, the White House has said. As a result, when large processing facilities were halted by the spreading coronavirus, livestock producers lost a significant amount of their sales markets, and some were forced to euthanize their animals. In response, the USDA created the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program to provide up to \$375 million to aid the creation or expansion of smaller, independent processors. The first phase of the program that recently closed for applications is poised to distribute about \$150 million in grants. Funding requests totaled more than \$800 million, the USDA reported. Other key aspects of the framework include:

- A new \$300 million program to help farmers transition into organic agricultural production.
- \$75 million to support urban agriculture.
- \$600 million for cold storage, refrigerated trucks and processing facilities that are not covered by the meat and poultry program.
- \$40 million to train meat and poultry processing workers for smaller, independent facilities.
- \$155 million to boost the availability of healthier foods in smaller and underserved communities.

Funding for the initiatives will come from the Biden-backed \$1.9 trillion Covid relief plan Congress passed last year "and other relief legislation," according to USDA.

A handful of agricultural groups initially reacted positively to USDA's plan, including the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Farmers Union, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, American Farmland Trust, Organic Trade Association and Organic Farming Research Foundation.

## **5. Drought Resilience Interagency Working Group Releases Summary Report**

The Biden Administration last week released the Drought Resilience Interagency Working Group's (IWG) Summary Report outlining the actions taken to date to improve drought-stricken communities' longer-term resilience to drought through financial and technical assistance. Last month marked one year since the establishment of the Drought Resilience IWG as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's whole-of-government approach to confronting climate change. Download the [Summary Report](#) (PDF, 337 KB). We reviewed this document last week. The positives:

- Our organization is a strong supporter of close coordination between federal agencies on water resources matters. A good example of this is the continued cooperation between Reclamation's WaterSMART program and the NRCS EQIP program.
- Producers in the Klamath Basin (where I live) were grateful for the drought financial assistance provided by both USDA and Reclamation, in a year when they received no surface water from Upper Klamath Lake for the first time since 1907. The farmers and ranchers here appreciate the financial lifeline, but they would really rather farm and produce food than to get paid not to do so, especially when there is water available.

Areas of concern:

- The report makes NO mention of food security, of which water for agriculture is obviously a critical component. This, despite the fact that the Biden Administration last made a concerted effort to demonstrate that it wants to act to address global food security.
- Agriculture is addressed fleetingly, and in some parts of the report, not at all.
- We're appreciative of the focus on investment in infrastructure that's made in the report. Much of the report is dedicated to how the agencies will spend the BIL dollars. However, the report dedicates a lot of space to the amount that is being spent, but not so much on what is being achieved through the spending.
- The drought challenges associated with water scarcity and forest health are massive in scale; it's difficult to see in the report how the scale of these problems is really being met.
- Particular mention is made in the report of cooperation and management occurring in the Klamath and Central Valley Projects. These and the others mentioned in the report (i.e., the Colorado and Columbia River Basins) are all important, but they are not the only impacted watersheds. We're seeing water curtailments and reduced plantings throughout the West, which is going to have a cumulative impact on the ability of our country to feed itself and the world.

I was interviewed by a reporter from *Politico* about our reaction to the report, and, after reviewing it internally, I gave her an appraisal that is pretty close to our take, above.

## **6. IIJA Implementation**

### **a. Reclamation: \$240 Million to Repair Aging Water Infrastructure**

The Department of Interior last month announced an investment of \$240.4 million for infrastructure repairs in fiscal year 2022 from the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA), also referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed into law by President Biden last November. The IIJA makes one of the largest investments in drought resilience in American history, including \$8.3 billion for water infrastructure programs and \$1.4 billion for ecosystem restoration and resilience, dramatically expanding Reclamation's ability to use existing program authorities to serve communities through infrastructure improvements that fundamentally impact

their quality of life. Importantly, the IIJA aligns with the solutions advanced by a Western water coalition in 2021 that included more than 230 organizations from 15 states that collectively represent nearly one-third of all agricultural production in the country, and many of the local and regional public water agencies that supply water to more than 75 million urban, suburban, and rural residents. The coalition was led by a steering committee that included the Family Farm Alliance, Association of California Water Agencies, California Farm Bureau, National Water Resources Association and Western Growers.

Public Law 116-260 (December 2020) created a revolving fund called the Aging Infrastructure Account. The authorization for an aging infrastructure account at the U.S. Treasury Department is a game-changer for most transferred work operators and reserved work project beneficiaries in the Reclamation system. With this authority in place, we are now seeing ‘once-in-a-generation’ funding to back it. The program, facilitated through Reclamation, includes significant repairs on canal linings, dam spillways and water pipeline replacements.

The projects selected for funding last month are found in all the major river basins and regions where Reclamation operates. Among the 46 projects selected for funding are large projects to conduct canal repairs in Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada and Wyoming, dam spillway repairs in Nebraska, pipeline repairs in Utah and investments in a pumping plant in Montana. Projects in Colorado, Oregon and Washington are also being funded. Reclamation concluded the initial application period for these funds on January 31, 2022. The second application period for extraordinary maintenance funding is planned for October 2022.

b. Reclamation: \$17.3 million to improve water efficiency in West

Reclamation last month also selected 22 projects to share \$17.3 million in WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants. These competitive projects improve water use efficiency, increase renewable energy production, and reduce the risk of water conflicts in the Western United States. The selected projects include lining and piping canals, installing and upgrading water meters and timers, installing solar to reduce power demand, and adding automated gate controls. The projects will be completed in two or three years, depending on the funding received. To view all the selected projects, please visit [www.usbr.gov/watersmart/weeg/](http://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/weeg/). This funding supplements the investments from the IIJA, which contains \$400 million over five years for WaterSMART grants, including drought resiliency projects. In 2022, Reclamation is making \$160 million available and will release other funding opportunities this spring. To learn more about how Reclamation implements the IIJA, please visit [www.usbr.gov/bil](http://www.usbr.gov/bil).

c. Department of Transportation Waives “Buy America” Requirements

*Bloomberg Government* reports that the U.S. Transportation Department (DOT) is giving states and industry 180 days to start working on procedures to comply with ‘Buy America’ requirements,

although the administration touted the need for domestic sourcing of all materials for building infrastructure. The notice was published in the Federal Register on May 25, and notes that the department had heard from stakeholders worried about the mandate. The administration last month issued guidance requiring that projects funded by the infrastructure package source American steel, iron, and construction materials. The infrastructure law (Public Law 117-58) mandated that the guidance be put in place by May 14. The construction industry quickly raised concerns, according to *Bloomberg*.

The Alliance – along with the Association of California Water Agencies, California Farm Bureau, National Water Resources Association and Western Growers Association earlier this year sent a letter to the Interior Department and Bureau of Reclamation, urging Interior to employ discretion and flexibility regarding the “Build America” mandate. We specifically request that you provide a general applicability waiver consistent with the law’s public interest criterion to ensure that we can deliver on the Administration’s commitment to modernize our water infrastructure to address climate resiliency and safe and reliable water deliveries to Western water users.

## **7. WOTUS Regional Roundtables Begin**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has begun the first of ten virtual stakeholder meetings regarding changes to the definition of “Waters of the U.S.” (WOTUS) under the federal Clean Water Act. The Family Farm Alliance is preparing to participate at the Western roundtable scheduled for later this month. We will be represented at the WOTUS Western Region roundtable, scheduled for June 16. Our thanks go out to California Farm Bureau for including us in their formal regional roundtable proposal to EPA. Other farming organizations have been engaged in the initial roundtables. Some farm groups have been critical of the initial sessions. Courtney Briggs, AFBF senior director of government affairs, says the first roundtable lacked diversity needed to discuss WOTUS.

EPA and the Army Corps of Engineer (Corps) most recently proposed an interim WOTUS definition and took comment on it through February 7, 2022. The Alliance developed a formal comment letter on this matter. That proposed rule interprets WOTUS to mean the waters defined by a collection of Corps and EPA regulations referred to as the “1986 regulations,” with amendments to reflect the agencies’ interpretation of the statutory limits on the scope of WOTUS as informed by past Supreme Court decisions, including *Rapanos v. United States*. The agencies have said they plan a second “more durable” WOTUS rulemaking “that they anticipate proposing in the future” and “which would build upon the foundation of this proposed rule.” The series of virtual regional roundtables planned for this spring and summer are intended to foster discussion on regional differences in water bodies.

### **a. Western Regional Roundtable**

The Western Regional Roundtable will delve into the unique features of Western water bodies,



including vernal pools, intermittent and ephemeral streams, and the distinctive hydrology of the West, where much of the stored water resides in mountain snowpack. State and federal agency implementation and regulatory roles on water quality matters will also be discussed. I will represent the Alliance at the June 16 roundtable and will advance the Alliance position that expanded federal CWA jurisdiction would negatively impact irrigated agriculture and Western communities in many ways, such as adding additional regulatory burdens to water resiliency projects.

#### b. Complicating Factors

The changes to the WOTUS rules may already be a done deal, *Harvest Public Media* recently reported. The public comment period for that change ended months before the virtual roundtables started. The matter is further complicated by the Supreme Court's recent decision to hear *Sackett v. EPA*. This closely watched case will determine whether the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit "set forth the proper test for determining whether wetlands are 'waters of the United States'" under the CWA. As previously reported, the Alliance is joining in an "agriculture" brief in this case, led by AFBF. Now that the Supreme Court agreed to hear the appeal in *Sackett v. United States*, Republican lawmakers and other supporters of the Trump-era WOTUS definition have urged EPA and the Corps to pause development of any new WOTUS definition until after the high court rules. Over 200 House Republicans in March sent a letter urging the Biden Administration to halt their rulemaking until the U.S. Supreme Court rules on *Sackett v. EPA*. The virtual roundtables will continue through June 24. Final changes to the definition of WOTUS and how rules are implemented will likely be announced by the end of the year.

### **DEVELOPMENTS IN CONGRESS**

Lawmakers return to Capitol Hill after a one-week recess, where a bipartisan group of senators continues talks on a potential gun violence package and the Jan. 6 select committee prepares to unveil its findings when primetime hearings get under way on Thursday (*The Hill*).

#### **8. Senate Committee on Agriculture Subcommittee Hearing**

Senator Michael Bennet (D-COLORADO) will be chairing a hearing in the Senate Ag Committee's Conservation, Climate, Forestry and Natural Resources Subcommittee this Tuesday on "The Western Water Crisis: Confronting Persistent Drought and Building Resilience on our Forests and Farmland". Alliance Advisory Committee Member Andy Mueller (General Manager, Colorado River Water Conservation District) will be testifying on behalf of his district at this hearing. We developed extensive written testimony for this hearing, which provides an opportunity to tee up some of our farm bill priorities and drought priorities.

## **9. Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee Hearing**

The Senate ENR Committee is conducting a full committee hearing, tentatively titled, “Extreme Drought in the West: An examination of short- and longer-term solutions” on Tuesday, June 14 at 10:00 a.m. (Eastern). Alliance President Pat O’Toole has been invited to testify for the Minority. Pat has been asked to discuss potential policy solutions to drought in the West, especially from an Upper Colorado River Basin rancher perspective. Other invited witnesses include Camille Touton (Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation), John Entsminger (General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority), Maurice Hall (Vice President, Climate Resilient Water Systems, Environmental Defense Fund), and Charlie Stern (Specialist in Natural Resources Policy, Congressional Research Service).

## **10. 2022 WRDA Moves Forward in Congress**

The U.S. Senate and House in the past month both moved versions of biennial water projects legislation that lays out a blueprint for how the Army Corps of Engineers tackles flood control, navigation and ecosystem restoration. Recent versions of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) have also included provisions for Bureau of Reclamation projects, something the 2022 WRDA does not provide. The 2022 WRDA being advanced in each chamber of Congress appears to be more Corps-centric, although there are provisions that focus on the Western U.S.

### **a. Senate WRDA Bill Clears Committee with No Opposition**

The Senate WRDA bill passed the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in early May by a vote of 20-0. Committee Chair Tom Carper (D-DE) and Ranking Member Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) have said their legislation builds on the recently passed \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package and would authorize Corps projects in all 50 states. The Senate bill includes several sections of interest to Western water users. We’ll be keeping an eye on those areas of the Senate WRDA that address agency coordination on Western water matters, water supply conservation provisions, Columbia River flood management, NEPA reporting, and assessing Western water infrastructure.

### **1. House T&I Approves WRDA Bill With Expectations of House Floor Vote in June**

The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee later in the month passed their version of WRDA, only approving a handful of the multitude of amendments proposed to the bill during their earlier markup. The panel approved by voice vote [H.R. 7776](#) from Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OREGON) and ranking member Sam Graves (R-MO), which was unveiled earlier in the week. The legislation approves new projects and policies for the Corps work on navigation, flood control and ecosystem restoration, and contains various bipartisan provisions to boost the agency's ability to tackle sea-level rise, erosion and the threat of increasingly destructive coastal storms. Many expect that H.R. 7776 will move to the floor of the House for a vote later this month.

## **11. Senate ENR Subcommittee Hears 17 Water Bills**

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Subcommittee on Water and Power last month heard testimony on 17 bills dealing with drought mitigation and hydropower projects. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton was the sole government witness at the hearing. The Family Farm Alliance since early last year has been engaged with Senate staff as several of the regional and West-wide bills were developed. The Subcommittee also included a number of additional bills that address specific water issues and needs in California, North and South Dakota, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Several of the bills were intended to address aging infrastructure in various parts of the West, like the Goshen Irrigation District tunnel collapse that occurred in Wyoming. A summary of each bill the Alliance engaged in is discussed further below.

### **b. *Water for Conservation and Farming Act (S. 953)***

The "Water for Conservation and Farming Act," from Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), would create a Bureau of Reclamation Infrastructure Fund that would receive \$300 million annually from the Reclamation Fund for 30 years starting in FY2031 to support water recycling projects, water-use efficiency projects under WaterSMART, and dam safety. It would also authorize \$25 million over five years to support fish passage projects in California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington state. This bill provides important tools to address water and natural resources challenges across the West that are important to our members, while certain provisions in the legislation do raise some concerns. The Alliance strongly supports the bill's provisions for the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA). Our members in California, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington are strong supporters and benefactors of FRIMA, which supports voluntary fish screen and passage projects. However, several other provisions of the bill that appear intended to focus on drought impacts to species also raise questions and concerns. Significant implementation questions also exist. We will closely examine any proposal – particularly at this time when promoting domestic food production will be more important than ever before – that seeks to move water away from agriculture through voluntary water transfers, including through groundwater substitution activities.

### **c. *The Canal Conveyance Capacity Restoration Act (S. 1179)***

S. 1179 from Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CALIFORNIA) would authorize cost shared federal funding to restore San Joaquin Valley canals that support groundwater recharge areas, as well as authorize funds to restore salmon runs on the San Joaquin River. S. 1179 will address the severe subsidence impacts that have substantially reduced the carrying capacity of the water delivery system of the State of California to provide for a more resilient water supply, especially during the severe droughts of these past several years. For these reasons, the Alliance is in full support of the enactment of S. 1179.

d. The Watershed Results Act (S. 3539)

The "Watershed Results Act," from Sen. Wyden would direct the Department of Interior to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish two to five watershed restoration pilot programs that would use advanced analytics to prioritize performance-based conservation projects across the West. Each pilot program must incorporate predictive data analysis to analyze millions of acres of a watershed to precisely locate the most effective acres for restoration that will make the largest impact. By prioritizing investments in conservation and measuring results, we believe we can create a market for farmers to grow "bushels of nature" alongside our food supply. The Alliance strongly supports S. 3539.

e. Amendments to Existing Law Proposed by Senator Risch

The Alliance supports [S. 4175](#), from Sen. Jim Risch (R-IDAHO) which would amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11) to authorize "certain extraordinary operation and maintenance work" for canals through densely populated areas, and for other purposes. These canals, typically delivering irrigation water to farms and ranches in Reclamation watersheds in the West, were originally built in the desert environment of a developing watershed. As time went on, communities sprang up and housing tracts were developed alongside these canals creating potential hazards that, if a failure occurred, could result in loss of life and property. S. 4176 from Sen. Risch would amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to modify eligibility requirements for small water storage and groundwater storage project grants program, and to expand eligibility of funds for rehabilitation of projects developed and operated under the Carey Act. The Alliance supports S. 4176, which would reduce the minimum size of an eligible small surface and groundwater storage facility from 2,000- to 2-acre-feet, making important small regulating reservoirs eligible for grant funding under the program.

f. STREAM Act (S. 4231)

The "Support to Rehydrate the Environment, Agriculture and Municipalities (STREAM) Act" (S. 4231) from Sen. Feinstein (D-CALIFORNIA) would authorize \$750 million in cost shared funding for nonfederal water and groundwater storage, \$300 million in cost shared funds for water recycling, \$150 million in cost shared funds for desalination projects, \$100 million for drinking water and \$150 million for low-interest loans for water supply projects. The STREAM Act includes provisions that continue the "Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act" (WIIN Act) storage program in a revised form, as well as extending the availability for cost-shared grant funding for non-congressionally authorized Title XVI water recycling, reuse, and desalination projects. Importantly, the STREAM Act would grandfather storage and conveyance infrastructure projects that receive construction funding in the bipartisan infrastructure bill enacted earlier this Congress to receive new funding authorized by the STREAM Act to complete construction. Alliance members are involved with several of those projects in California, Idaho

and Washington state. The bill would also provide some non-reimbursable funding for modifications to extraordinary maintenance on aging Reclamation projects that would provide additional public benefits. We appreciate Senator Feinstein's longtime, continued work to improve water security and drought resilience in the Western United States. Her STREAM Act contains a number of provisions that could be helpful to our members if enacted.

g. Water Data and Security Act of 2022 (S. 4236)

New Mexico's Democrat Senators Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan have introduced S. 4236, which would create a national framework for data generated by the planning and management of water resources to include stream flows, precipitation, groundwater and soil moisture, as well as water use by the agriculture, industrial and municipal sectors. The bill would also direct the Interior Department to set up a federal working group to create an integrated water resource management plan for the Rio Grande Basin. We support the water data framework provisions of S 4236. Western water resources decision-making demands accurate and timely. Critical and vital information is gathered and disseminated through a number of important federal programs. There is a serious need to focus on coordinated data collection and dissemination. Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NEW MEXICO) introduced companion legislation earlier in the month. Alliance contractors met virtually with Rep. Stansbury in early May to discuss the legislation, which the Alliance board of directors unanimously supported at its monthly board meeting.

## ALLIANCE INITIATIVES

### 12. Food Insecurity Public Relations Campaign

Driven by concerns with rising food prices and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Family Farm Alliance board at its meetings in Reno last February directed contractors to work with others in an effort to improve communications on what rising inflation and the Ukraine crisis means to American consumers. In April, the Alliance partnered with California Farm Water Coalition and Klamath Basin producers to place a full-page ad in the *Wall Street Journal* warning of the consequences if State and federal officials ignore the need for reliable water supplies and a stable, affordable, domestic food supply. The WSJ ad was a great first step, but it was only a first step. Now we need to hammer that message home through social media and other outreach if we are to have any hope of the message penetrating. It's critical that the next phase keeps the focus on impact on consumers, not impact on farmers. Other related recent efforts include:

- Alliance Director Paul Orme and I co-authored another guest opinion which the *Arizona Republic* published last month: "Water Policy Threatens Our Food Supply". The *Republic*, published in Phoenix, is circulated throughout Arizona and is the state's largest newspaper. The *Arizona Capitol Times* included a full-page ad paid for by the Alliance, which is essentially a full-page reprint of this guest column.
- Alliance director Don Schwindt (COLORADO) and I co-authored an opinion piece that

was published in the May 11 edition of the *Colorado Sun*, as part of this initiative.

- The Farm Bureau in Fresno County – the largest ag production county in America- re-ran the story the Alliance published in the April 2022 “Monthly Briefing” about food supply concerns.
- *Progressive Grocer*, an industry trade publication, recently covered the issue of land fallowing, impending food shortages, and higher prices as described in an informational graphic published by CFWC.
- Two California producers and CFWC Executive Director Mike Wade appeared on a recent segment that was reported on by Lester Holt on NBC Nightly News.
- The BBC recently published a story on water shortages and the effects they are having on the nation's food supply. CFWC President Bill Diedrich, appeared in the story talking about how many foods grown in the San Joaquin Valley this year show up in the store next year, explaining why consumers might not feel the pinch right away.

As reported elsewhere in this report, House Republicans last month hosted an oversight forum examining how the ongoing Western drought contributes to skyrocketing grocery and electricity prices nationwide. Members heard from witnesses across the country who are experiencing these impacts firsthand and further examine the need to implement short and long-term drought solutions for American consumers. I testified at this forum, as did several Alliance members and Bill Diedrich, representing CFWC.

We are part of a small working group that did the heavy lifting of raising the money for the WSJ ad, but without additional reinforcement of that message, it will not hit home. Working with CFWC, efforts are underway to do some focused social media advertising, as a follow-up to the full-page ad. With contributor support, we extended its reach into a digital ad program on Facebook and Instagram using the same artwork, message, and link to the landing page: <https://www.farmwater.org/food-security-and-water/>. We’ve run two, two-week ad campaigns so far and are six days into the third. So far, our efforts have resulted in 1,851,697 impressions, a reach of 420,574, and 55,404 clicks, or individual visits to the web site.

*This is a quick summary of just a few of the issues the Alliance has been engaged in. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [dan@familyfarmalliance.org](mailto:dan@familyfarmalliance.org) if you would like further information about what the Alliance is doing to protect water for Western irrigated agriculture.*