



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: DAN KEPPEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2021

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, tracking, and influencing water legislative developments in Congress, and public outreach and speaking engagements. We also delivered some high-level presentations on drought and climate that took place in Denver (COLORADO) and the United Nations climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland. These issues and other matters important to our members are further discussed in this memo.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPMENTS

1. President Biden Signs Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill into Law

With President Joe Biden's signature on the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* last month, a national coalition representing thousands of Western farmers, ranchers, businesses, and rural and urban water providers declared a victory for Western water users and called on the Administration to immediately clear the path for projects that will address critical Western water supply needs. This is a great victory for Western water users. The Western water provisions included in this legislation represent a once-in-a-generation federal investment that will bolster our aging water infrastructure and keep water flowing to our nation's farms and ranches. It will also improve our ability to provide water supply reliability for cities and the environment in future droughts. The coalition behind the year-long effort to secure \$8.3 billion in Western water infrastructure provisions includes more than 220 organizations from 15 states that collectively represent \$120 billion in agricultural production—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.

a. Politics

The House passed the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill 228-206, sending the measure to President Joe Biden's desk after months of limbo. Only 13 House Republicans voted for the bill, alongside all but 6 Democrats. In order get the vote on the infrastructure package, moderate House Democrats essentially promised progressives they'd vote for the \$1.75 trillion *Build Back Better (BBB)* climate and social spending reconciliation bill once the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) score finalized the total cost of the legislation implementing the Biden Administration's agenda. Prior to the House vote, the two bills were effectively linked to each other, with House progressives calling for both bills to move together and with assurances the Senate would pass the reconciliation bill. But House progressives finally agreed to the vote on the bipartisan infrastructure package, even without ironclad commitments from moderate Senators to agree to the newly downsized \$1.75 trillion BBB. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes more than \$8 billion for projects that will enhance water supply reliability across the West, including repairing aging dams and canals, building new surface and groundwater storage and conveyance facilities, funding water conservation and recycling projects, and improving watershed and ecosystem management.

b. Biden Administration Begins Work on Implementation

With the President signing the bipartisan infrastructure package into law, advocates will now turn their attention towards working with the Biden Administration to quickly drive implementation of the Western water provisions. Now, the energies of our infrastructure coalition will be redirected to the agencies overseeing administration of the funds; namely – the Bureau of Reclamation. We need to make sure that most of these dollars are spent on-the-ground for the intended purpose, and don't get swallowed up by red-tape and government administration. We've already put Reclamation on alert that we'll be working with them to ensure that billions of dollars are spent on new infrastructure in a way that is efficient and effective.

The Biden Administration quickly announced plans to staff up and expand the federal workforce to manage the record amount of funding allocated in the newly passed bipartisan infrastructure deal. The federal agencies responsible for disbursing the increase in funding are preparing to hire more workers to manage everything from fixing highways to removing lead water service lines and upgrading aging sewers. President Biden announced the appointment of Mitch Landrieu, former mayor of New Orleans and Louisiana lieutenant governor, whom he has charged with implementing a historic \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package. This Task Force will be "committed to break down barriers and drive implementation of infrastructure investments across all levels of government", according to the White House. Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton says efforts are already underway across Reclamation as the agency prepares to implement the new law. Reclamation last month established a Program Management Team to lead implementation and develop a Program Management Plan (PMP), which will specifically address how we will request and share data on obligations, expenditures, procurement, regulatory compliance, management of human capital, and plans for celebrating project milestones. Reclamation will host a series of stakeholder listening sessions this month, prior to finalizing the PMP. We're hearing that

Reclamation plans to conduct listening sessions on existing programs (December 10), new programs (December 17) and other matters (January 7).

2. Appointments

The U.S. Senate last month confirmed three key Biden nominees to fill critical leadership roles in federal agencies important to Western water users. The Senate last month confirmed Hon. Michael Connor, a former Interior Department Deputy Secretary under the Obama Administration, to lead the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) as the next Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Also, the Senate confirmed the nomination of Ms. Camille Touton to be the next Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. And, the Senate last month confirmed an important member of Secretary Vilsack's team at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), approving the nomination of Robert Bonnie to be undersecretary for farm production and conservation.

3. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation: DRAFT Directives and Standards

a. Extended Repayment of Extraordinary Maintenance Costs

The Alliance last month worked with its members to develop formal comments in response to the Reclamation's draft revisions to PEC 05-03, "Extended Repayment of Extraordinary Maintenance Costs". Reclamation initiated the revisions to this Directive and Standard (D&S) immediately following the passage of Public Law 116-260 in December 2020. This law, which we supported, creates a revolving fund called the Aging Infrastructure Account. It also requires Reclamation to establish an annual application period for eligible contractors to apply for funds and extended repayment. 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. The ability to offer low interest long term loans from Reclamation for extraordinary maintenance have been long overdue. With this authority in place, we are now seeing "once-in-a-generation" funding to back this authority. The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* includes \$8.3 billion for Reclamation, including \$3.2 billion for the aging infrastructure account.

Our comment letter provides specific comments that revolve around one point: if Reclamation makes it difficult or places restrictions and barriers to their transferred work operators or reserved work project beneficiaries in obtaining these loans, the program will not work as planned or expected. This would make it highly unlikely that funding provided to the account will be disbursed in a timely manner. This in turn could further delay much needed improvements to aging federally owned transferred and reserved works in the West. We've also requested a virtual meeting with Reclamation leadership on the proposed changes to PEC 05-03.

b. Other D&S Developments

Reclamation has released several other draft D&S for public review, including:

- PEC 10-05 Reclamation Standard Water-Related Contract Articles, Standard Article 5: Operation and Maintenance of Transferred Works (Federal Construction)
- PEC 10-06 Reclamation Standard Water-Related Contract Articles, Standard Article 6: Operation and Maintenance of Project Works (Federally Assisted Construction)
- BGT 02-02 Reimbursability and Recharacterization of Project and Program Costs
- CMP 11-01 Title Transfer for Reclamation Project Facilities.

In part due to our request, the Commissioner's office has extended the comment deadlines for draft D&S to **12/9/21**. This is now indicated on the [Reclamation Manual web page](#).

4. Biden Administration Overhaul of Trump Environmental Rules

The Biden Administration is moving forward on the President's Inaugural Day pledge to undo rulemaking efforts completed by the Trump Administration associated with implementation of federal laws that have critical bearing on Western water management activities. While certain litigious environmental groups have cheered these recent developments, the Family Farm Alliance and other organizations who supported the Trump actions are concerned. The Biden Administration has proposed removing and replacing rules implemented by the Trump Administration that change implementation of the Clean Water Act (CWA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In our view, many of the changes made to these decades-old federal environmental laws by the Trump Administration helped bring them into the modern era. We'll go back to drawing board again with the Biden Administration and continue to focus on important process improvements. We need processes that allow for more efficient, informed, and transparent management and infrastructure development decisions without impacting the effectiveness of environmental or species protection measures.

I reported on the administration's proposed actions on these plans last month. Since that time, we've prepared the following comments letters:

- Final letter sent to White House Council on Environmental Quality via the [regulations.gov](#) portal (Tracking # kw6-z136-jq8b) regarding proposed changes to NEPA implementation procedures.
- Final letter submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding its proposed ESA implementation revisions. The letter supports and references more detailed letters prepared on this topic by the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition.

The Family Farm Alliance in August also developed formal comments for EPA and the Corps on the WOTUS matter. In related news, EPA and Corps officials released a *Federal Register* notice asking for input on the potential selection and location of 10 sites for regional roundtables to take input on how various regions are affected by the definition of WOTUS, and to learn about stakeholders' experience, challenges and opportunities under different regulatory regimes. The agencies are inviting stakeholders to organize a targeted set of interested parties and regional

representatives to participate in these discrete roundtables. The regional roundtable “contest” has many in the water world scratching their heads and scrambling to find partners and put together proposals. We’re working with the Arizona and California state Farm Bureaus to fill slots on two regional roundtable proposals.

5. Joint Secretarial Order: Tribal Homelands Initiative

As reported last month, the White House Tribal Nations Summit also took place on November 15, the same day President Biden signed the bipartisan infrastructure bill into law. Earlier in the day, the president announced that the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and the Interior have created the "Tribal Homelands Initiative". This effort is intended to improve federal stewardship of public lands, waters, and wildlife by "strengthening the role of tribal communities in federal land management". Through a [joint Secretarial Order](#) (PDF, 270 KB), the two Departments codified a policy to facilitate agreements with tribes to collaborate in the co-stewardship of federal lands and waters. Here's the related [press release](#). The Order additionally directs the Departments to ensure that tribal governments play an integral role in decision-making related to the [management of federal lands and waters](#) through consultation, capacity-building, and other means consistent with applicable authority. I encourage you to read the secretarial order, with an eye towards implications, risks and opportunities.

6. Executive Order (EO) 14042: Vaccine Requirements

A federal appeals court last month temporarily blocked the Biden administration’s new rules that require many employers to ensure that their workers are vaccinated or tested weekly for Covid-19. A three-judge panel on the New Orleans-based Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals granted an emergency stay prohibiting enforcement of the rules for now, saying they raise “grave statutory and constitutional issues.” The Fifth Circuit said it would quickly consider whether to issue an injunction against [the vaccine and testing requirements](#), ordering the Biden administration to file initial legal papers by late this afternoon. The affected states include Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Utah, and South Carolina. We previously reported that the federal government has extended to January 4 (from December 8) the deadline from [E.O. 14042](#) for most American workers, as well as covered federal contractors to get vaccinated against Covid-19 or subject themselves to frequent testing.

We have serious concerns that the effect of implementing the President’s EO could have devastating impacts on national food supply chains and Western water supply reliability. The White House guidance defines a “covered contractor employee” in broad terms, which raises questions from irrigation districts and others who have entered into water supply, operation and maintenance, construction, and other contracts with the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Many of these entities have specific concerns not only about the necessity of the vaccine mandates and timing of the potential vaccine requirements but also how far-reaching these mandates could be to ditch riders and farmworkers. There are legitimate questions on whether those with federal water supply and other contracts would be covered by the mandates. I shared with you late last

month the final letter that we sent on this matter to Interior Assistant Secretary Tanya Trujillo and Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Camille Touton.

DEVELOPMENTS IN CONGRESS

7. Build Back Better (BBB) House Budget Reconciliation Bill

After weeks of negotiations, the House on November 19 passed the \$1.85 trillion BBB (H.R. 5376), by a vote of 220-213, with Rep. Jared Golden (D-ME) being the lone Democrat voting against the measure. No Republicans supported the bill. Leading up to the House vote, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CALIFORNIA) unexpectedly took control of the House floor, speaking for nearly nine hours to derail the vote. The highlights and the current state of play as the legislation moves forward in the Senate are discussed below.

a. House Highlights

Following the release of the full Congressional Budget Office score for the bill, moderate Democrats upheld a promise to vote for the \$1.85 trillion dollar package, which is centered on President Biden's social and climate agenda. This legislation includes:

- \$555 billion to fight climate change, including \$320 billion in the form of tax credits for companies and consumers who install solar panels, improve the energy efficiency of buildings, and purchase electric vehicles
- \$400 billion for universal pre-K for children ages 3-4.
- \$200 billion for child tax credits, extending the credit through 2022.
- \$165 billion in healthcare spending, reducing health care premiums under the Affordable Care Act and expanding Medicare coverage
- \$150 billion each to expand affordable home care and for affordable housing

The Ferguson Group have prepared a detailed report on this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like a link to their report.

b. Senate State of Play

The Senate will continue working on its version of the bill. Major points of contention remain, including: the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction, paid family and medical leave, drug pricing, and provisions on immigration. The major players to watch during the negotiations are Sens. Joe Manchin (D-WV), Kyrsten Sinema (D-ARIZONA), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT), all of whom have taken aim at various provisions they want added or removed from the House-passed version of the bill. Sen. Manchin has objected to the overall price tag, spending in early years paired with offsets in later years, as well as the bill's four weeks of paid family leave and Medicare hearing coverage. He has expressed worries about inflation and he's not yet buying the argument from other Democrats that President Biden's BBB will lower everyday costs. Sen. Sinema has kept her

specific objections largely private but is seen as possible a dealmaker by many Democrats.

Speaker Pelosi downplayed the Democrat divisions remaining between the House and the Senate, saying more than 90 percent of the bill “was written together” and predicting Congress will get it to President Biden's desk without much trouble. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has set a Christmas goal for passage of the BBB. The federal debt ceiling still will need to be raised or suspended, as well. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned Congress that the U.S. faces a risk of default after December 15. There is no current plan for lifting the borrowing cap. The *New York Times* reports that Republicans continue to insist that Democrats must act alone to address the issue, while Democrats have countered that raising the borrowing cap is a shared responsibility given that both political parties have incurred big debts over the last several years.

8. Senate Clears Stopgap Government Spending, Averting Shutdown

Congress returned from the Thanksgiving holiday with a Friday, December 3 deadline to pass a stopgap funding bill to keep the federal government open. After significant political posturing, Congress passed a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) late Thursday night funding the government at enacted FY 2021 levels through Friday, February 18, 2022. This also means that adoption of any FY 2022 Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending requests (i.e., earmarks) that advanced through the legislative process earlier this year in the House and/or Senate will be delayed until February at the earliest.

On Wednesday night, House Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) introduced the Further Extending Government Funding Act ([H.R. 6119](#)), the short-term CR, which includes \$7 billion to continue supporting Afghanistan evacuees and an extension of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) authorization, among [other items](#). The House passed H.R. 6119 by a vote of [221-212](#), with Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) as the only House Republican voting for the measure early Thursday evening. The Senate then passed the bill by a vote of [69-28](#), with 19 Republicans voting in support. Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), who was one of the main voices leading the charge to shut down the government over vaccine mandates, shifted his stance to demanding a vote on an [amendment](#) to remove funding for the vaccine mandate at the 50-vote threshold. He and Senator Roger Marshall's (R-KS) request was granted, and the Senate voted on the amendment first, which failed by a vote of [48-50](#).

President Joe Biden quickly signed H.R. 6119 into law later, averting a government shutdown. Continued negotiations between House and Senate Democratic and Republican leaders on all twelve FY 2022 Appropriations bills will now continue into January and February 2022.

ALLIANCE INITIATIVES

9. Climate Change Initiative

The Alliance continues to engage and discuss potential effects and impacts of climate change in the West, building upon the interest created by the Alliance’s report on climate change that was issued in 2007 and active engagement addressing climate change on Capitol Hill. The Alliance board of directors at its 2021 annual meeting supported its long-time policy of using climatic extremes and findings from its climate change report to advocate for “climate-smart” agriculture and needed changes in Western water policy. Through our involvement with Solutions from the Land (SfL) and the Steering Committee of the North American Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (NACSAA), we have been monitoring United National global climate talks over the past two years and bringing the voice of North American producers and land managers to the discussion table. NACSAA believes public policy should provide incentives for climate-friendly and commonsense farm improvements.

c. The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)

The 26th United Nations (U.N.) Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland was recently conducted, and Alliance President Pat O’Toole was definitely in the mix. The U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established an international environmental treaty to combat "dangerous human interference with the climate system". It was signed by 154 states at the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The treaty called for ongoing scientific research and regular meetings, negotiations, and future policy agreements designed to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. These negotiations are said by many – including U.N. leaders – to be the single most important factor in determining whether humanity suffers the worst consequences of climate change.

Alliance President Pat O’Toole and his wife Sharon were part of a team of American farmers and ranchers who traveled to Glasgow, Scotland last month with the intent of injecting some common sense into global talks regarding agriculture’s role in climate change. The O’Tooles were delegates to the COP26 event in Glasgow. The O’Tooles shared their experiences through a series of blog posts from the event, which are posted on the Intermountain West Joint Venture website (<https://iwjv.org>). Pat serves on the board of directors of Solutions from the Land (SfL), an organization which focuses on land-based solutions to global challenges. These ranchers, farmers, foresters, and partners advocate for enabling agricultural landscapes to provide solutions to challenges like food and energy security, sustainable economic development, and environmental improvement. (See solutionsfromtheland.org.)

a. Biden Administration Descends Upon Scotland

President Joe Biden during his election campaign said that he would aim to make American

agriculture the first in the world to achieve “net-zero” emissions if elected. His platform advocated for farmers to be able to participate in carbon markets, with the goal of creating new revenue streams. President Biden sought to restore the United States’ role as a major global player on climate change with an address on the opening day of the COP26 summit. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack in Glasgow underscored the USDA’s support for President Biden’s “whole-of-government” approach to combating climate change and creating jobs and economic growth in the United States. After President Biden joined leaders from the United Arab Emirates in officially launching the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM for Climate) on Nov. 2, Secretary Vilsack participated in numerous events to coalesce support for the initiative, which is designed to increase investment in climate-smart agriculture and food system innovation over five years.

Nearly 80 countries and non-government partners have joined in support and AIM for Climate has garnered \$4 billion in increased investment in climate-smart agriculture and food systems innovation, with the U.S. mobilizing \$1 billion over the next five years. Secretary Vilsack additionally highlighted USDA’s Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative, which he first announced during U.N. Climate Week in September. The initiative will connect agricultural producers who are implementing climate-smart practices with retailers, companies and consumers who are demanding low-carbon agricultural commodities. Secretary Vilsack also announced USDA’s support of the newly launched Pathways to Dairy Net Zero, an initiative to help accelerate climate action in the global dairy sector, bringing together organizations throughout the dairy supply chain and dairy farms around the world to collectively achieve net zero emissions in the next 30 years. The Biden administration send a contingent of career staff and lower-level political appointees to accompany the Cabinet secretaries attending the international climate talks.

Back in the U.S.A., the White House announced it will create a new division of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) that will coordinate federal climate change policy. The Biden administration will appoint Sally Benson, a professor of energy engineering at Stanford University, to head the newly created division, according to *The Washington Post*. The OSTP Energy Division will be focused on planning the transition to renewable energy and ensuring the U.S. meets its target of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

b. The O’Tooles in Glasgow

While in Glasgow, the Sfl delegation interacted with member state representatives, other farmer organizations and a wide cross-section of business, academic, conservation, environmental, renewable energy and health and nutrition stakeholders. Discussions with these parties focused on pathways to address growing climate change challenges across the globe. The European Union and others in Glasgow advocated for a top-down strategy to address global challenges. The Sfl team argued that farmers must be at the center of all discussions and decision-making. Producers can offer the significant input needed from across a wide range of agricultural interests and organizations that fall outside of typical policymaking structures.

Fossil fuels, especially coal, were the crux of the COP26 negotiations. Oil, gas, and coal provides

about 80 percent of all the energy used by human civilization. According to Mr. O'Toole, deforestation was a topic of concern at the talks, but discussion was not as robust as it could have been. An emphasis was placed on deforestation, but other than an exhortation to plant trees, attention was not given to the role sound forest management has in sequestering carbon and managing water.

In the end, the O'Tooles believe the SfL team of seven was highly effective. They communicated with all sorts of representatives including the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry, to the lone delegate from Tajikistan about the importance of agriculture and forestry, and its role as a solution to climate change. They also told them not to be distracted by those who would advance an "agriculture is broken" agenda and simplistically call for an overhaul of the sector without understanding the interdependent functions that make up the world's food, feed, fiber, energy and ecosystem services production platforms. [HERE](#) is a link to a great interview Pat did with the China Global Television Network at COP26. [HERE](#) is another story that ran in the *New York Times*, explaining the powerful role bankers played in the climate change summit.

10. OpenET Project

On October 21, the OpenET project announced the launch of a new online platform that uses satellite data to estimate water consumed by crops. The platform makes the data for the 17 western states widely available for the first time. The data for the current year and previous five years is available at no charge and is accessible down to the field scale. The OpenET project is a public-private collaboration led by the Desert Research Institute, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Habitat Seven, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), with additional participation from Google, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), USDA, and various universities, with both government and private funding. The apparent core objective is to provide farmers and local water managers with free ET data, with revenue generated from organizations interested in large-scale access to the data beginning in 2022.

The House Water, Oceans and Wildlife (WOW) Subcommittee conducted a November 4 hearing where [legislation](#) that would inject major funding into this program and also modify the WaterSMART program to include this as an assessment tool. WOW Subcommittee majority staff reached out to us after hearing that on this matter last month, after hearing that we had some concerns. We organized a ZOOM meeting with other regional agricultural organizations and WOW Subcommittee staff after they told us they were "definitely open to feedback and changes to address any concerns you may have before moving the bill."

In our meeting, we expressed support for new technology that could help our members but shared our concerns about: 1) how the information could be misused by less constructive parties; 2) protection of private property rights; 3) accuracy of data; and 4) linkage to WaterSMART in the legislation. Later this month, our same ag group will be meeting with representatives from EDF and the Desert Research Institute to try to get some answers to the questions about OpenET that we've been posing since last summer.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND MISCELLANEOUS

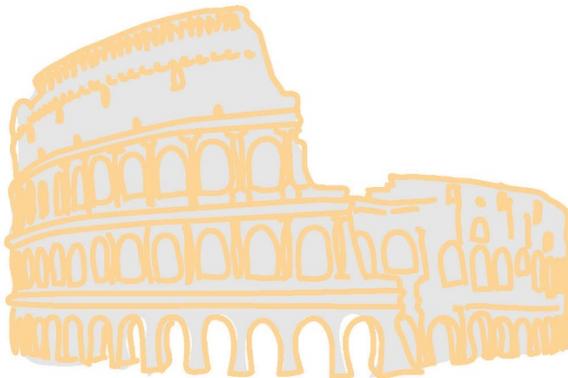
- Last month, I spent a day in Eugene, Oregon where I spoke to the Association of Oregon Counties annual convention about our involvement in helping to secure the new Western water dollars in the infrastructure bill signed into law by President Biden earlier this week. After my presentation, I talked to a bunch of county commissioners from around the state who were incredibly supportive of these new programs and our efforts.
- I spent last week on the road, speaking to the annual conferences hosted by Oregon Water Resources Congress and the Washington State Water Resources Association. It was great to see a lot of our friends once again, face-to-face, in-person. Directors Charlie Lyall and Mark Hansen did a fantastic job organizing an Alliance reception at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane on Wednesday night.



Family Farm ALLIANCE
2022 Annual Conference

"Those in the Arena"

*Focusing on those who are on the ground,
working hard to manage Western water*



Save the Date:
Feb. 24-25, 2022

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| <p>Conference Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keynote Presentations• Reclamation Roundtable• A Look at DC from the Hill• Derby Dam Fish Screen Tour | <p>Silver Legacy Resort Reno, NV</p> <p>Registration info coming soon familyfarmalliance.org</p> |
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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 if you would like further information about what the Alliance is doing to protect water for Western irrigated agriculture.