

Representative Jim Costa

House Appropriations Committee: Energy & Water Subcommittee

Member's Day Hearing

April 10, 2024

- Thank you, Chairman Fleishmann and Ranking Member Kaptur for the opportunity to share my priorities for the FY25 Energy & Water appropriations bill.
- I look forward to working with the subcommittee on shared goals including advancing Western water storage projects, repairing aging water infrastructure, providing reservoir managers the tools necessary to accurately forecast for extreme atmospheric river and drought events, and deploying technology to better care for our environment and wildlife.

### **Water Operations Technical Support (WOTS) Program**

- Drought and flood extremes in the West over this decade highlight the need for the Army Corps to incorporate the latest weather and seasonal forecasting observations to improve reservoir operations.
- As capabilities to predict Atmospheric Rivers several days before landfall become more promising, the importance of tools like the Water Operations Technical Support (WOTS) and the Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) programs cannot be overstated.
- These tools provide Western reservoirs with the means to track, monitor, and respond to major precipitation events from flooding to drought conditions.
- During dry years, water managers must be empowered to retain water that would be otherwise needlessly released.
- To have a more reliable water supply, I request that the Committee fund the WOTS program at \$19 million for FY25, including \$15 million for FIRO.

### **WIIN Act Water Storage**

- The 2023 storms helped ease some of the impacts of prolonged drought, but further investment is needed in aging water infrastructure to improve drought resiliency.
- Western states must have the surface and groundwater storage capacity to capture water in wet years for use in dry years.
- I thank the Committee for providing \$134 million in funding for Water Infrastructure Investments for the Nation (WIIN) Act projects in FY24 and I urge the Committee to continue to fully fund these projects in FY25.
- As climate change continues to cause unprecedented levels of drought, these funds are critical for increasing water storage across the 17 Western Reclamation states.

### **Report Language for the repair of Bureau of Reclamation Canals**

- In California, The Friant-Kern Canal, Delta Mendota Canal, and California Aqueduct have all been seriously impaired by factors including land subsidence. These defects seriously jeopardize the Bureau of Reclamation's ability to meet water delivery obligations in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Water is the lifeblood of the West. To address inequality, feed the nation, and meet our climate goals, funds must be allocated to upgrade this crucial infrastructure,
- and I urge the Committee to support report language to provide up to \$30 million to repair Reclamation Canals in FY25 and advance these important, ongoing projects.

### **Protect the San Joaquin River Restoration Program**

- I urge the Committee to avoid partisan poison pill riders, such as efforts to eliminate the San Joaquin River Restoration Program.
- The goals of the Program are to restore and maintain endangered fish populations on the San Joaquin River and reduce adverse water supply impact to Friant Division Contractors.
- While the program is not as far along as we would all like, it is moving forward, and to eliminate it entirely would throw water management of

the San Joaquin River into chaos, uncertainty, and subject to the whims of litigation.

### **Sacramento River Anadromous Fish Screens**

- Finally, I request that the Committee provide \$7.8 million to complete the last anadromous fish screen projects on the Sacramento River and provide sufficient resources to meet other high priority fish passage and fish screen projects in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the San Joaquin River Basin, and Westwide.
- 95% of the water diverted from the Sacramento River will pass through these fish screens. These projects support the environment and local wildlife, including salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon all of whom are considered threatened or endangered by state or federal agencies.