

Representative Jim Costa (CA-21)

House Appropriations Committee: Energy & Water Subcommittee

Member's Day Hearing

April 8, 2025

- Thank you, Chairman Fleishmann and Ranking Member Kaptur for the opportunity to share my priorities for the FY26 Energy & Water appropriations bill.
- I look forward to working with the subcommittee on shared goals of deploying technologies for better reservoir management, advancing western water storage projects, and upgrading our aging water infrastructure.

Water Operations Technical Support (WOTS) Program

- 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.
- Across the West, 40-60 percent of annual precipitation is caused by extreme atmospheric river events, meaning that an entire water year may hinge on a few AR storms. These few storms demonstrate the need for the Army Corps to incorporate the latest weather and seasonal forecasting observations to improve reservoir operations.
- Further, these tools empower Western reservoirs with the means to track and respond to major participation events, while retaining water that would otherwise be needlessly released.
- To have a more reliable water supply, I request that the Committee fund the WOTS program at \$15 million for FY26, including \$15 million for FIRO.

WIIN Act Water Storage

- The recent winter storms in March helped to increase levels of snowpack in the Northern Sierra Mountains towards above-average levels, but the Southern Sierras have lagged behind, demonstrating the need for effective surface and groundwater storage capacity.

- As climate change continues to cause prolonged levels of drought, these funds are critical for increasing water storage across the Western Reclamation states.
- Such investments are necessary to capture water during wet years and be adequately prepared for dry years.
- I urge the Committee to provide the full funding of \$134 million for Water Infrastructure Investments for the Nation (WIIN) Act projects in FY26.

Report Language for the repair of Bureau of Reclamation Canals

- Water is the lifeblood of the West, and in California, the Friant-Kern Canal, Delta Mendota Canal, and California Aqueduct have all been seriously impaired by age and land subsidence.
- These defects seriously jeopardize the Bureau of Reclamation's ability to meet water delivery obligations in the San Joaquin Valley.
- To feed the nation, ensure efficient deliveries, and retain a strong water supply, funds must be allocated to upgrade this critical infrastructure.
- I urge the Committee to advance these important projects by supporting report language to provide up to \$30 million to repair Reclamation Canals in FY26.

Protect the San Joaquin River Restoration Program

- The San Joaquin River Restoration Program aims to restore and maintain endangered fish populations on the San Joaquin River and reduce adverse water supply impacts to Friant Division Contractors.
- While the program is not as far along as we would all like, it is moving forward, and efforts to eliminate it entirely would throw water management of the San Joaquin River into chaos and uncertainty.
- I urge the Committee to avoid any efforts to eliminate the San Joaquin River Restoration Program.

Sacramento River Anadromous Fish Screens

- To complete the final two anadromous fish screens on the Sacramento River, I request that the Committee provide \$7.8 million in funding to finish these projects and meet other high priority fish passage and fish

screen projects in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the San Joaquin River Basin, and West-wide.

- 95% of the water diverted from the Sacramento River will pass through these fish screens. These projects help support a more resilient and reliable water supply for agricultural communities, while enhancing the environment for local wildlife that are considered threatened or endangered.