

Representative Jim Costa (CA-21)

House Appropriations Committee: Energy & Water Subcommittee

Member's Day Hearing

March 25, 2026

- Thank you, Chairman Fleischmann and Ranking Member Kaptur for the opportunity to share my priorities for the FY27 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 precipitation events, while retaining water that would otherwise be needlessly released.
- To have a more reliable water supply, I request that the Committee maintain funding levels for FIRO at \$19 million for FY27.

WIIN Act Water Storage

- Dry conditions in the Sierra Nevada Mountains have led to rapid melt of snowpack. This most recent heatwave has refilled reservoirs in the short-term, below-average snowpack conditions highlight the need for investment in critical infrastructure to store additional surface water and groundwater.

- 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 funding of \$201 million for Water Infrastructure Investments for the Nation (WIIN) Act projects in FY27.

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 \$60 million to repair Reclamation Canals in FY27.

Provide Funding for Airborne Snow Observatories (ASO) Programs

- This fiscal year, I led a bipartisan request to increase funding for the Bureau of Reclamation's Snow Water Supply Forecast Program, which is a critical enabler for snowpack measuring flights and runoff forecasts via Airborne Snow Observatories (ASO) programs.
- Snowpack is the primary source of water supplies in the Western United States, and having the best possible information is critical for water supply forecasting for farms, cities, and the environment.
- California, for example, has shifted from extremely dry conditions to significant precipitation and flood operations in the past month alone. Yet limitations in the availability of spatial snowpack data and runoff forecasting still constrain the ability to translate those storms into confident water-supply projections and operational decisions.
- Reclamation's Snow Water Supply Forecast Program utilizes NASA-developed ASO technology to measure the full-watershed snowpack inventory at high resolution. This tool allows for more reliable and

precise measurements of stored water that can result in significant water supply and flood control benefits across the West.

- I urge the Committee to support funding efforts of \$5 million towards this critically important program.

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 provide full funding for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program.