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Statement in support of H.R. 2749  
The "Dams Accountability, Maintenance, and Safety Act"

June 22, 2015

As Chairman of the Washington County Commission, as well as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Clean Water Services, the water resources management utility for more than 560,000 residents of Washington County, I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for H.R. 2749, the "Dams Accountability, Maintenance, and Safety Act" introduced by Rep. David Valadao.

This bill would provide a more efficient path for dam safety improvements across the country by providing Reclamation with renewed authority to work with local entities to plan, schedule, budget, and construct priority dam safety improvements. Currently under the Safety of Dams program, the Bureau of Reclamation cannot consider any "additional benefits" when determining how to structurally improve their facilities. This legislation would allow Bureau to take into account the local and regional water needs when putting together a corrective action plan for its seismically-deficient facilities.

Clean Water Services is a repayment contractor on Reclamation's Scoggins Dam, and has been working closely with Reclamations' Safety of Dams program to address significant seismic safety concerns at this federal facility. Located in northwestern Oregon, the Hagg Lake reservoir created by Scoggins Dam supports nearly 250,000 jobs, provides drinking water for more than 400,000 residents, irrigates 17,000 acres of cropland, and sustains water quality in the Tualatin River to protect fish and wildlife habitat.

In 2004, Congress authorized the Tualatin Basin Water Supply Project Study and authorized \$2.9 million to study alternatives to meet the long-term water needs of the region. The Tualatin Basin Water Supply Project is a basin-wide, integrated water resource management project that will diversify our water supply; help ensure we are able to respond to anticipated climate change and drought cycles; and meet the 50-year water supply needs for:

- Water quality and critical habitat improvements in the Tualatin River and its tributaries
- Cities, industry and economic development; and
- Agriculture

After nearly a decade of analysis, expansion of Hagg Lake has been identified as a central component for meeting the long-term water needs of our region.

The integration of Reclamation's Safety of Dams improvements with our region's need to expand this facility would reduce costs and leverage our shared investments in order to protect public safety, secure our primary water supply, and meet the long-term needs of our community. Under existing law, Reclamation cannot plan for nor accept funds from a non-federal sponsor for such improvements once a facility is in the Safety of Dams process.

From the perspective of the non-federal sponsor and the people of Oregon, it makes little sense to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to secure the dam without simultaneously allowing for increased water supply. The sustained and recurring droughts in Oregon and other western states underscore the need to address not only the threat of earthquakes but also the threat of water shortages. While such improvements might not be feasible or desired in every instance, Reclamation should have the flexibility to work with non-federal sponsors who seek both safety and water supply improvements.

This authority would not increase costs to the Safety of Dams program nor obligate federal taxpayers in any way to pay for water supply improvements. As a local sponsor, we recognize and accept our obligation to pay these costs for additional storage capacity. But authorization is needed now to fully address the public need for safety and future water supply.

We greatly appreciate the thorough study and commitment of Reclamation resources to assess the safety of Scoggins Dam. We are working collaboratively with Reclamation to develop a feasible strategy for ensuring the safety of the dam at the least cost to taxpayers and the residents of Washington County.

The safety, security and reliability of the nation's water supply is central to our economic health and security. The resiliency of water infrastructure is more important than ever as we face the challenge of recurring droughts in Oregon and throughout the West. Our collaboration with Reclamation at Scoggins Dam will help our region secure our primary water source and plan for the future. H.R. 2749 is a necessary piece in order to ensure this collaboration can continue.

Thank you for your attention to this legislation.