

**Statement for the Record
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries**

H.R. 6107, the Urban Canal Modernization Act

November 14, 2023

The Department of the Interior (Department) through the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) appreciates the opportunity to provide this statement for the record on H.R. 6107, the Urban Canal Modernization Act. The Department generally supports the intent of the bill to help our operating partners with costs associated with maintenance of urban canals.

Reclamation's canals were originally constructed through relatively unpopulated areas in the Western United States. Today, some of Reclamation's canals are subject to the spread of urban development and could pose a potential risk to populated areas in the event of a failure. Reclamation currently classifies and monitors approximately 880 miles of canals in its Urban Canal Hazard Program.

If enacted, H.R. 6107 would recategorize any extraordinary maintenance work on an urban canal of concern as emergency extraordinary maintenance work, thereby allowing the Secretary to provide non-reimbursable funds to cover 35% of project costs. This would reduce operating partners' maintenance costs for these urban canals, passing on costs to Reclamation for extraordinary maintenance work that would have otherwise been funded by Reclamation project beneficiaries.

Additionally, Section 2(f) would allow any reimbursable funds provided under H.R. 6107 to serve as a non-federal source of funds for the purposes of any cost-sharing requirement for a federal grant. Reclamation believes that this language may lead to some confusion with water managers as funding made available under Section 9603 of the SECURE Water Act is intended to carry out extraordinary operations and maintenance work to ensure the structural safety of facilities. In contrast, Reclamation's grant programs have their own specific statutory requirements that may not be consistent with the requirements and goals of funding made available under Section 9603. In order to make use of the funding under this section as a non-federal match, the submitted project would need to be consistent with the requirements and goals of each program (e.g., repair of aging infrastructure as compared to new investments in water conservation). For example, Reclamation has provided funding for canal lining projects that were both deemed extraordinary maintenance, and eligible in part under the WaterSMART program. However, in most cases, canal lining projects funded under the WaterSMART project would include costs beyond the maintenance needs fundable under Section 9603. As such, if enacted as

proposed, the amount of funding under the SECURE Water Act that could be applied as a non-federal match may be limited.

As an agency, Reclamation works collaboratively with our partners to ensure the safe and exceptional stewardship of our aging and urban infrastructure. Reclamation recognizes the additional risk that canals can pose to populated areas and supports the intent of the bill.