

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

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

Legislative Hearing

July 21, 2022

The Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record on H.R. 8090, a bill to reauthorize funding for the Reclamation Climate Change and Water Program.

H.R. 8090, To reauthorize funding for the Reclamation Climate Change and Water Program

H.R. 8090 extends the authorization of appropriations for Reclamation’s climate change and water program from 2023 to 2033.

In 2009, Congress enacted section 9503 of the SECURE Water Act (Subtitle F, Title IX of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009), authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to implement a program to assess the risks to water supplies across the eight major Reclamation river basins resulting from climate change, and to work with stakeholders to develop watershed-scale strategies to address potential water shortages and conflicts. Reclamation implemented this authority through what is known as the WaterSMART Basin Study Program (Program). Through the Program, Reclamation: (1) generates stakeholder-driven Basin Studies to address imbalances between water supply and demand in western river basins; (2) generates baseline assessments of climate change impacts to water resources summarized in SECURE Water Act Reports submitted to Congress every 5 years; (3) establishes site-specific pilots to incorporate climate change information into water management decisions; and (4) competitively selects projects for the development of applied science tools needed by water managers across the West to carry out Reclamation’s mission.

Reclamation has funded 27 Basin Studies in 15 Western States since the Program’s start in 2009. These studies have strengthened relationships with non-federal entities and have created a technical foundation contributing to many collaborative follow-on efforts, including eight water management pilots, two Basin Study updates, and ongoing collaboration between the seven Colorado River Basin States on drought.

Reclamation has submitted three SECURE Water Act Reports to Congress—in 2011, 2016 and 2021—since the SECURE Water Act became law. The SECURE Water Act Reports include assessments of climate change impacts to water supplies across the West and individual chapters on each of the eight major Reclamation river basins: (1) Colorado River, (2) Columbia River, (3) Klamath River, (4) Missouri River, (5) Rio Grande, (6) Sacramento River, (7) San Joaquin River; and (8) Truckee River. The SECURE Water Act Reports also make new tools and data

resources available to the public and to water managers as they face uncertainties of a changing climate; including how climate change impacts water deliveries, hydropower production, maintenance of ecological resiliency, flood control, and water quality, among other types of impacts.

Beginning in 2019, Reclamation has implemented the Applied Science Tools funding opportunities as part of the Program to provide new tools and information to water managers in the West. Reclamation has awarded \$6.6 million in cost-shared grants to non-federal partners for 39 projects to develop improved forecasting and modeling tools, and decision support tools to better manage hydrologic data. Similarly, Reclamation has funded 35 internal applied science projects to increase Reclamation's technical capacity and to improve modeling, forecasting and hydrologic data management within Reclamation. Reclamation has also funded 14 Reservoir Operations Pilots to identify opportunities to increase water management flexibility through reservoir operations.

In summary, Section 9503 of the SECURE Water Act authorizes activities that are central to Reclamation's and our non-federal partners' management of water under increasingly severe drought conditions exacerbated by climate change across the West. This authority allows Reclamation to assess the impacts from climate change and drought and to work with stakeholders to identify appropriate solutions, and to support technical capacity to improve water management by water managers in the West.

Reclamation supports an extension of the Program authorization and looks forward to working with the sponsor and the Committee on this goal.