



## Oregon Water Resources Congress

795 Winter St. NE | Salem, OR 97301 | Phone: 503-363-0121 | Fax: 503-371-4926 | [www.owrc.org](http://www.owrc.org)

May 3, 2017

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
2134 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: The Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2017

Representative DeFazio:

On behalf of the Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC), I am writing to express our support of Congressman DeFazio's efforts to reauthorize the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and tackle the water quality financing needs in the country under The Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2017. The CWSRF is an effective program that addresses critical water infrastructure needs while benefitting the environment, local communities, and the economy.

OWRC was established in 1912 as a trade association to support the protection of water rights and promote the wise stewardship of water resources statewide. OWRC members are local governmental entities, which include irrigation districts, water control districts, drainage districts, water improvement districts, and other agricultural water suppliers that deliver water to roughly 1/3 of all irrigated land in Oregon. These water stewards operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower facilities that serve a diverse set of farmers, ranchers, and other water users contributing to the local and global economy.

The CWSRF is a perfect example of the type of program that should be reauthorized because it creates jobs while benefitting the environment, and is an efficient return on taxpayer investment. CWSRF funded projects provide family wage jobs in construction and professional services industry that are a crucial component to economic recovery in Oregon and other states. Moreover, as a loan program, it is a wise investment that allows local communities to leverage their limited resources and address critical infrastructure needs that would otherwise be unmet.

OWRC was very pleased to see the passage of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) by Congress in December last year. An integral piece of the funding puzzle for our member districts was reinstated by this act, irrigation district eligibility for principal forgiveness. The CWSRF is often an integral part of an overall package of state, federal and local funding that necessitates a stronger level of assurance that loan funds will be available for planned water infrastructure projects. Irrigation districts are often located in rural communities and have a small number of farmers with limited capacity to take on loan debt. Even a small reduction in the principal repayment obligations can make the difference in whether or not a district can move forward with a project.

The CWSRF program is an important tool utilized by OWRC members across Oregon, and we applaud this effort by Congressman DeFazio to reauthorize this key program. OWRC looks forward to working with the Committee and this Congress as the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2017 moves forward.

Sincerely,  
April Snell  
Executive Director  
Oregon Water Resources Congress

***The mission of the Oregon Water Resources Congress is to promote the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water resources.***