



Oregon Water Resources Congress

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OREGON WATER RESOURCES CONGRESS
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I am Anita Winkler, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC). This testimony is submitted to the United States House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water and Power, for the record on the oversight hearing "The Bureau of Reclamation and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: A Progress Report and Planning for the Future."

OWRC members operate and maintain water supply systems (federal and non-federal) that include reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower generation facilities production; and deliver water to 1/3 of all irrigated land in Oregon. The infrastructure systems that store and deliver the water were built years ago, some more than 75 years ago, and are in dire need of efficiency upgrades and essential structural repairs or replacement. Our member districts need funding assistance in order to continue to deliver reliable water supplies to farmers and other water users, and to meet important environmental goals.

Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 was made available to Oregon irrigation districts through the Bureau of Reclamation's Challenge Grant Program, now called WaterSMART, and through subcontracts with the Deschutes River Conservancy. This funding helped irrigation districts address a variety of water infrastructure needs while creating jobs in Oregon. Through these Bureau of Reclamation grants and Deschutes River Conservancy sub-grants, three Oregon districts were awarded over \$5.5 million in September 2009. A summary of the three district projects is enclosed.

The Bureau of Reclamation ARRA-funded district projects in Oregon have been successful in meeting a breadth of essential water infrastructure needs while providing jobs and stimulating the local economy. Benefits of these projects include increased water conservation, improved water quality, enhanced fish habitat, and generation of renewable energy (hydropower). Coupled with locally provided match funding, over \$10,000,000 will be invested in the economy (both locally and nationally) and in long-term water infrastructure that will benefit communities for many years. To date, all three district projects are more than 50% completed based on the year-to-date reporting found on the ARRA website—which only covers through March 31. I would note that based on real-time reports provided to OWRC by the districts, some of the projects or the separate phases of an individual project are 100% complete.

The importance of Bureau of Reclamation ARRA-funded projects in Oregon and the need for further investment cannot be overstated. Oregon's unemployment rate remains among the highest in America at 10.5 percent. District water infrastructure projects help put Oregonians back to work in an array of fields, ranging from construction and labor to administrative assistance. Investing in water infrastructure also ensures that the agricultural entities that depend on reliable irrigation water are able to continue producing quality food and fiber for the nation.

While only three Oregon districts received ARRA funding from the Bureau of Reclamation in 2009, there are many more shovel ready projects that could commence immediately upon receipt of project funding. We have enclosed a summary of potential water infrastructure projects in Oregon that could commence immediately if more funding is made available. These “shovel-ready” projects represent over \$48 million of water infrastructure projects that would provide immediate economic benefits to the local and state economy through providing jobs and the purchase of materials and supplies. Many district projects are in rural areas of Oregon that have been particularly impacted by the economic downturn and would greatly benefit from increased local jobs that would result from district infrastructure projects. Further, many of these projects will lead to additional investments by water users in on-farm improvements with related jobs and purchase of materials and supplies.

One of the challenges confronting many of our members is the lack of program funding for the pre-implementation project phase. We ask that as you evaluate future funding opportunities for water infrastructure please include funding for the finalization of environmental, design, and engineering phases of water infrastructure projects. It is important that funding programs for water infrastructure include financial assistance for pre-implementation project planning as well as infrastructure repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of deteriorating infrastructure where the primary goal is the infrastructure itself, not just water conservation or fish protection – the kind of essential structural repair that much of Oregon’s aging water infrastructure needs. These planning activities are requisite to districts’ ability to seek funding for project implementation and their ability to protect their infrastructure, especially from climate change related impacts, so it will be able to deliver water into the future. Further, these non-construction elements also create jobs and are often necessary in determining the type of project to be implemented or if a project should move forward.

The Bureau of Reclamation’s use of ARRA funding in the WaterSMART grant program has proven to be a valuable tool that has appropriately been used to meet critical water infrastructure funding needs while providing quality jobs. There is also now an established process for administering and managing funding that can be used for further infrastructure investment and implementation of shovel ready projects. We strongly support further investment in the Bureau of Reclamation’s WaterSMART grant program and other ARRA agency recipients so that districts can continue to address critical water infrastructure needs, provide quality jobs and ensure the reliable delivery of water for our nation’s food and products.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Anita Winkler
Executive Director

Enc:
Summary of ARRA funding
Summary of Potential 2010 District Projects

Summary of Oregon District Projects Funded by 2009 ARRA

Central Oregon Irrigation District

Bureau of Reclamation, Subgrant from the Deschutes River Conservancy = \$1,000,000¹

- Pipe portions of Central Oregon Irrigation District's canal systems to conserve water and reduce maintenance costs and implement the Juniper Ridge Project.

Swalley Irrigation District

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation Grant = 1,908,935²

- Pipe the remaining .75 miles of Swalley 's Main canal; complete the construction of a .75 MW hydropower plant; and develop/install SCADA controls and telemetry along the main canal. The objectives are to stabilize the water supply, improve public safety, produce renewable energy, conservation of 9,471.63 acre feet of water per season, meter water delivery and provide pressurized delivery to customers.

Over 50% completed, with \$1,382,588 disbursed.²

Three Sisters Irrigation District

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation Grant = \$1,150,000²

- Pipe 16,500 feet of Three Sisters Irrigation District's main canal with 54" HDPE pipe replacing an open canal to improve irrigation management while generating renewable energy through the pressure created in the pipeline. The prime purpose is to improve streamflow and water quality conditions in Whychus Creek for fish, wildlife and aquatic habitat. The project will strengthen relationships between a number of organizations, private and public, that are working to improve conditions in Whychus Creek and ultimately in the Deschutes River.

Over 50% completed, with \$882,090 disbursed.²

Bureau of Reclamation Subgrant through the Deschutes River Conservancy = 1,500,000¹

- Pipe portions of Three Sisters Irrigation District Main canal to conserve water and reduce maintenance costs.

**Total BOR ARRA Funding for Oregon Irrigation District Projects
= \$5,558,935**

¹ The Bureau of Reclamation provides financial assistance to the Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC) which then provides "subgrants" to Central Oregon Irrigation District and Three Sisters Irrigation District. The projects are implemented by the irrigation districts and funded through cost sharing agreements between the irrigation district and the DRC.

² Data based on recipient reports for Oregon filed through March 31, 2010. <http://www.recovery.gov> Last visited: July 14, 2010.

Summary of Shovel-ready District Projects in Oregon

Farmers Irrigation District, Hood River County - *Farmers Canal Pipe Project*: Increase water conservation, improve water quality, reduce electricity consumption, and increase small hydro production by installing pipeline. **Total Project Cost: \$10,000,000 Funding Requested: \$10,000,000.**

Lowline Canal Pipe Project: Conserve water and improve water quality by installing pipeline.

Total Project Cost: \$2,200,000 Funding Requested: \$ 2,200,000

Enterprise Irrigation District, Klamath County - *District Piping Project*: Increase water conservation and reduce electricity consumption by installing pipeline. **Total Project Cost: \$277,344 Funding Requested \$113,792 District Funds: \$20,000**

Greenberry Irrigation District, Benton County - *Greenberry ID Phase 3 Pipeline Project*: Conserve water, augment instream flows for fish and wildlife, and improve delivery efficiency by installing pipeline and pumping station. **Total Project Cost: \$2,640,337 Funding Requested: \$988,910**

Middle Fork Irrigation District, Hood River County - *Glacier Ditch Piping Project*: Increase water conservation, improve water quality, and improve district efficiency by installing pipeline. **Total Project Cost: \$451,000 Funding Requested: \$200,000 District Funds: \$51,000**

North Unit Irrigation District, Jefferson County - *Lateral 58-11 Piping Project*: Increase water conservation, reduce electricity consumption, and create opportunity for small hydro production by installing pipeline. **Total Project Cost: \$2,100,000 Funding Requested: \$1,050,000**

Owyhee Irrigation District, Malheur County - *Lower Owyhee River Rehabilitation Project*: Improve water quality and increase water conservation by installing pressurized pipeline. **Total Project Cost: \$1,222,363 Funding Requested: \$ 563,495**

Talent Irrigation District, Jackson County - *E12 Piping Project*: Increase water conservation and improve water quality by installing pressurized pipeline. **Total Project Cost: \$162,000 Funding Requested: \$81,000.**

Talent Main Canal Piping Project: Increase water conservation by completing pipeline installation. **Total Project Cost: \$95,000 Funding Requested: \$47,500**

Three Sisters Irrigation District, Deschutes County - - *Whychus Creek Water Conservation Project*: Increase water conservation, augment instream flows for fish and wildlife, and generate small-scale hydroelectricity by completing pipeline installation. **Total Project Cost: \$13,400,000 Funding Requested: \$2,000,000**

Tumalo Irrigation District, Deschutes County - *Tumalo Feed Canal Project*: Increase water conservation, improve water quality, and augment instream flows for fish and wildlife. **Total Project Cost: \$16,000,000 Funding Requested: \$16,000,000**

Vale Oregon Irrigation District, Malheur County - *Namorf Diversion Security Project*: Improve facility security by covering and enclosing diversion dam. **Total Project Cost: \$31,000 Funding Requested: \$9,500**

Total Project Costs = \$48,579,044
Total Funding Requested = \$33,254,197