

Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
May 1, 2019

RE: FY2020 Budget for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is highly supportive of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program (CWSRF) and is requesting that appropriations for this program be increased to at least **\$2.5 billion** in FY2020. The CWSRF is an effective loan 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 production.

FY2020 Appropriations

We recognize our country must make strategic investments with scarce resources. The CWSRF is a perfect example of the type of program that should have funding increased because it creates jobs while benefitting the environment and is an efficient return on taxpayer investment. CWSRF projects also provide much needed construction and professional services jobs, particularly in rural areas facing economic hardship. 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.

In Oregon, the CWSRF is administered by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), who responsibly maintains the program through repaid loans, interest, fees, and available federal capitalization grants. According to EPA, for every \$1 of federal capitalization funding, \$3 worth of assistance is provided, leveraging available funds to maximize benefits for local communities and the environment we share. Unfortunately, available funding continues to be woefully insufficient to meet the growing water infrastructure funding needs in Oregon and nationwide.

Nationally, there are large and growing critical water infrastructure needs. In EPA's most recent survey, *The Clean Watersheds Needs Survey 2012: Report to Congress and Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment: Fifth Report to Congress*, the estimated funding need was \$384 billion (in 2011 dollars) for drinking water infrastructure and \$271 billion (in 2012 dollars) for wastewater infrastructure needs respectively. Funding for water infrastructure, specifically CWSRF, needs to be incrementally increased in order to meet these critical needs.

Background of CWSRF Usage by Irrigation Districts

Over the course of the program's 30-year history in Oregon, several OWRC member districts have successfully used CWSRF for projects that improve water quality and water quantity associated with water delivery diversions, canals and pipelines throughout the state. OWRC and our members are highly supportive of the CWSRF, including promoting the program to our members and annually submitting federal appropriations testimony to support increased funding for the CWSRF. We believe it is an important funding tool that irrigation districts and other water suppliers are using for innovative piping projects that provide multiple environmental and economic benefits.

Numerous irrigation districts and other water suppliers need to pipe currently open canals, which significantly reduces sediment, improves water temperature, and provides other water quality benefits to rivers and streams. Piping immediately improves the efficiency of the water delivery system and helps increase available water supplies for fish and irrigators alike. These projects also decrease energy consumption (from reduced pumping) and have opportunities for generating renewable energy, primarily through in-conduit hydropower. However, continually reducing the amount of funds available for these types of worthwhile projects has created increased uncertainty for potential borrowers about whether adequate funding will be available in future years. 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. Reductions in CWSRF could lead to loss of grant funding and delay or derail beneficial projects that irrigation districts have been developing for years.

We continue to be highly supportive of expanding "green infrastructure," in fact, irrigation districts and other water suppliers in Oregon are on the forefront of innovative piping projects that provide multiple environmental benefits, which is discussed in greater detail below. In 2009, four Oregon irrigation districts received over \$11 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) through the CWSRF for projects which created valuable jobs while improving water quality. These four projects were essential to DEQ not only meeting, but exceeding, the minimum requirement that 20% of the total ARRA funding for the CWSRF be used for "green" projects. Without the irrigation district projects, it is likely that Oregon's CWSRF would not have qualified for ARRA funding.

The success Oregon districts have had in using the loan program to design and implement multi-benefit projects has led to increased applications to the CWSRF. Now irrigation districts are once again eligible for a key funding element, principal forgiveness (which was reinstated with the passage of the WIIN Act in 2016 and related state rulemaking in 2017), and we expect to see even more interest in the program. OWRC is hopeful with an increase in money available, there will be enough funding available to complete projects that will not only benefit the environment and the patrons served by the water delivery system, but also benefit the economy.

CWSRF Needs in Oregon

The appropriations for the CWSRF program over the past few years has been far short of what is needed to address critical water infrastructure needs in Oregon and across the nation. This has led to fewer water infrastructure projects, and therefore a reduction in improvements to water quality and water quantity.

We are pleased to see a proposed modest increase in appropriations after several years of decreased funding and hope to see this trend continue as addressing infrastructure needs has become more expensive and even more critical. DEQ's most recent "Proposed Intended Use Plan Update #2 - State Fiscal Year 2019," lists 31 loan applications in need of a total of \$171,670,456 in Oregon alone.

The following irrigation district projects are currently ranked by DEQ in the top three by overall score and also meet several categories of the Green Reserve requirement related to improved water and energy efficiency. Increased funding will help catalyze many more projects like the ones below in Oregon and throughout the nation.

Middle Fork Irrigation District (Hood River County) \$20,000,000

Sec. 319 Design and Construction, Clear Branch Dam Rehabilitation and Coe Branch Pipeline. The district will implement multiple projects to improve water quality and quantity associated with its irrigation diversions in the Middle Fork Hood River watershed. Specific projects include: installing a new deep water outlet and improving fish passage in Laurance Lake; installing new irrigation pipe to alleviate impacts from current irrigation system and addressing return flows from the irrigation system; improving the spillway at the Clear Branch Dam; and improving irrigation efficiency by district patrons. The project meets the Green Project Reserve category 2.2-8 (water efficiency). The project is consistent with the 2014 Final Oregon Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.

Swalley Irrigation District (Deschutes County) \$16,000,000

Sec. 319 Design and Construction, Irrigation Modernization Project. This irrigation piping project includes the installation of pressurized pipe to eliminate seepage and evaporative loss from open ditches; flow regulating and metering devices at service connections; pressurized delivery to eliminate individual pumps system-wide; active education and a sprinkler exchange program. The project meets Green Project Reserve category 2.2-8 for water efficiency and category 3.2-2 for energy efficiency because piping and pressurizing the irrigation canals will result in approximately 1.1 million kWh/year in energy conservation and conserve up to 16 cubic feet per second of water during the irrigation season. The project is consistent with the 2014 Final Oregon Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.

Lone Pine Irrigation District (Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook Counties) \$ 2,000,000

Sec. 319, Design and Construction, Irrigation Modernization Project. This project will modernize district-owned canals and laterals to conserve water, improve operational efficiency, reduce electrical and energy costs, reduce O&M for farmers through decreased pumping and improve habitat in the Deschutes River. It will achieve these goals by piping all of the district's open canals using HDPE and steel pipe. The existing suspension bridge over the Crooked River is in disrepair and a new structure is needed to convey the irrigation water across the river. The district will replace the bridge with a siphon under the river. The project meets Green Project Reserve categories 2.2-8 (more efficient irrigation) and 3.2-2 (20% reduction in energy consumption) will prevent 8.8 cfs of water loss, will leave 5.2 cfs of saved water in stream and reduce energy use by 2,500,000 kW hours per year. The project is consistent with the 2014 Final Oregon Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.

The Importance of Strategic Partnerships and Local Watershed Planning

Additionally, OWRC is pleased that EPA continues “strategic partnerships” with the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and other federal agencies to improve water quality and address nonpoint source pollution. Oregon had two priority watersheds eligible for funding through the National Water Quality Initiative in 2014 and anticipates that additional watersheds will be included in the future. As Oregon is a delegated state, OWRC also feels strongly that DEQ is best situated to develop and implement activities to improve these and other impaired waterways in the state. DEQ’s administration of the CWSRF has been an extremely valuable tool in Oregon for improving water quality and efficiently addressing infrastructure challenges that are otherwise cost-prohibitive.

DEQ has recently revised Oregon’s CWSRF rules; thus making conservation easier and maximizing benefits in the State. Oregon’s success in watershed planning illustrates planning efforts work best when diverse interests develop and implement plans at the local watershed level with support from state government. As the national model for watershed planning, Oregon does not need a new federal agency or Executive Branch office to oversee conservation and restoration efforts. Planning activities are conducted through local watershed councils, volunteer-driven organizations that work with local, state and federal agencies, economic and environmental interests, agricultural, industrial and municipal water users, local landowners, tribes, and other members of the community.

There are over 60 individual watershed councils in Oregon already deeply engaged in watershed planning and restoration activities. Watershed planning in Oregon formally began in 1995 with the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon Recovery and Watershed Enhancement, a statewide strategy developed in response to the federal listing of several fish species. This strategy led to the creation of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) in 1999, a state agency and policy oversight board that funds and promotes voluntary and collaborative efforts that “help create and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.” OWEB projects that can be integrated with eligible CWSRF projects (and other state and federal funding programs) are helping revolutionize how we meet our critical water challenges and implement multi-benefit water infrastructure projects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we applaud the CWSRF program for allowing Oregon's DEQ to make targeted loans that address Clean Water Act issues and improve water quality while incentivizing innovative water management solutions that benefit local communities, agricultural economies, and the environment. This voluntary approach creates and promotes cooperation and collaborative solutions to complex water resources challenges. We respectfully request the appropriation of at least \$2.5 billion for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund for FY 2020.

Sincerely,

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Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
April 30, 2019

**RE: FY2020 Budget for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Restoration
Irrigation Mitigation Act Program**

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is writing to express its strong support for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Restoration Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) Program and is requesting that appropriations for this program be **\$15 million** in FY2020, which is the current authorized amount. The FRIMA program is an essential cost-share funding program that helps water users and fishery agencies better protect sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish species while ensuring water supply delivery to farms and communities.

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 production.

FY2020 Appropriations

The FRIMA program meets a critical need in fishery protection and restoration, complimenting other programs through the U.S Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS). Fish passage and fish screen installations are a vital component to fishery protection with several benefits:

- Keeps sensitive, threatened and endangered fish out of canals and water delivery systems
- Allows fish to be safely bypassed around reservoirs and other infrastructure
- Eliminates water quality risks to fish species

There are over 100 irrigation districts and other special districts in Oregon that provide water supplies to over one million acres of irrigated cropland in the state. Almost all of these districts are affected by either state or federal Endangered Species Act listings of Salmon and Steelhead, Bull Trout or other sensitive, threatened or endangered species. The design and installation of fish screens and fish passage to protect the myriad of fish species is often cost-prohibitive for individual districts to implement without outside funding sources.

Oregon irrigation districts anticipate no less than \$25 million in funding to meet current fish passage and fish screen needs in our state. Limited cost-share funds are available from the Oregon Watershed Enhanced Board (OWEB) program, but the primary cost-share for fish screen and fish passage projects has been provided by the districts and their water users. Projects include construction of new fish screens and fish passage facilities as well as significant upgrades of existing facilities to meet new requirements (new species or science) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service and the FWS. Upgrades are often needed to modernize facilities with new technologies that provide better protection for fish species as well as reduced maintenance and increased lifespan for the operator.

Background of the Fisheries Restoration Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) Program

FRIMA, originally enacted November 2000, created a federal partnership program incentivizing voluntary fish screen and fish passage improvements for water withdrawal projects in Idaho, Oregon, Washington and western Montana. The funding goes to local governments for construction of fish screens and fish passage facilities and is matched with non-federal funding. Irrigation districts and other local governments that divert water for irrigation accessed the funding directly, while individual irrigators accessed funding through their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), which are local governments affiliated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The original legislation in 2000 (PL.106-502) was supported and requested by the Pacific Northwest Partnership, a coalition of local governmental entities in the four Northwest states, including OWRC. The FRIMA legislation authorized \$25 million annually, to be divided equally among the four states from 2001 to 2012, which was when the original authorization expired. The actual funding appropriated to the FRIMA program (through Congressional write-ins) ranged from \$1 million to \$8 million, well short of the \$25 million it was authorized for and far short of what is needed to address fish passage and screening needs across the region. However, that small amount of funding was used to leverage other funds and assisted the region in making measurable progress towards installing fish screens and fish passage needed to protect sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish species.

FRIMA funding was channeled through FWS to state fishery agencies in the four states, distributed using an application and approval process based on a ranking system implemented uniformly among the states, including the following factors: fish restoration benefits, cost effectiveness, and feasibility of planned structure. All projects provided improved fish passage or fish protection at water diversion structures and benefitted native fish species in the area, including several state or federally listed species. Projects were also subject to applicable state and federal requirements for project construction and operation.

FRIMA was reauthorized as part of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) of 2016. However, a fifth state, California, was also added as an eligible FRIMA cost-share recipient and the program was only reauthorized for \$15 million, well short of the estimated \$500 million in fish screening and passage needs in the Pacific Northwest alone. Now that the program has been reauthorized, it is imperative the program receive appropriations so all five states can better leverage state/local funding to meet their fish passage and screening needs.

Program Benefits

FRIMA projects provide immediate protection for fish and fills a large unmet need in the West for cost-share assistance with fish screening and fish passage installation and improvements. FWS has issued a report covering program years FY 2002-2012 that provides state-by-state break-down of how the Congressional provided funding has been used in the program. Compared to other recovery strategies, installation of fish screens and fish passage has the highest assurance for increasing numbers of fish species in the Pacific Northwest. Furthermore, the installation of these devices have minimal impacts on water delivery operations and projects are done cooperatively using methods that are well accepted by landowners and rural communities.

The return of the FRIMA program will catalyze cooperative partnerships and innovative projects that provide immediate and long-term benefits to irrigators, fishery agencies, and local communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. This program is also a wise investment, with past projects contributing more than the required match and leveraging on average over one dollar for each federal dollar invested. FRIMA provides for a maximum federal cost-share of 65%, with the applicant's cost-share at 35% plus the on-going maintenance and support of the structure for passage or screening purposes. Applicants operate the projects and the state agencies monitor and review the projects.

Oregon Projects & Benefits

Twenty-six fish screens or fish passage projects in Oregon were previously funded using FRIMA for part of the project financing. These projects have led to:

- Installation of screens at seventeen diversions or irrigation pumps
- Removal or modification of twelve fish passage barriers
- Three-hundred sixty-five miles being re-opened to fish passage

In addition, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has used some of the FRIMA funding to develop an inventory of need for fish screens and passages in the state. Grants ranged from just under \$6,000 to \$400,000 in size with a local match averaging 64% of the project costs, well over the amount required under the Act (35%). In other words, each federal dollar invested in the FRIMA program generates a local investment of just over one dollar for the protection of fish species in the Pacific Northwest.

The following are examples of how Oregon used some of its FRIMA money:

Santiam Water Control District: Fish screen project on a large 1050 cubic feet per second (cfs) multipurpose water diversion project on the Santiam River (Willamette Basin) near Stayton, Oregon. Partners are the Santiam Water Control District, ODFW, Marion Soil and Water Conservation District, and the City of Stayton. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$400,000** leveraged a **\$1,200,000** total project cost. Species benefited included winter steelhead, spring Chinook, rainbow trout, and cutthroat trout.

South Fork Little Butte Creek: Fish screen and fish passage project on a 65 cfs irrigation water diversion in the Rogue River Basin near Medford, Oregon. Partners are the Medford Irrigation District and ODFW. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$372,000** leveraged a **\$580,000** total project cost. Species benefited included listed summer and winter steelhead, coho salmon, and cutthroat trout.

Running Y (Geary Diversion): Fish screen project on a 60 cfs irrigation water diversion in the upper Klamath Basin near Klamath Falls, Oregon. Partners are the Wocus Drainage District, ODFW, and Jeld-Wen Ranches. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$44,727** leveraged a total project cost of **\$149,000**. Species benefited included listed red-band trout and short-nosed sucker.

Lakeshore Gardens: Fish screen project on a 2 cfs irrigation water diversion in the upper Klamath Basin near Klamath Falls, Oregon. Partners are the Lakeshore Gardens Drainage District and ODFW. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$5,691** leveraged a total project cost of **\$18,970**. Species benefited included red-band trout, short-nosed sucker and Lost River sucker.

Conclusion

Increasing appropriations for FRIMA will fill a vital funding gap for fish screens and fish passage projects that are needed to better protect sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish species, which also benefits the economy, local communities, and the environment we share. FRIMA funds projects that are ready to be constructed and will provide immediate improved protections for fish and immediate jobs for the construction of the projects. Dollar-for-dollar, providing screening and fish passage at diversions is one of the most cost-effective uses of restoration dollars, creating fishery protection at low cost, with low risk and significant benefits.

The return of a robustly funded FRIMA program will catalyze cooperative partnerships and innovative projects that provide immediate and long-term benefits to irrigators, fishery agencies, and local communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. We respectfully request an appropriation of \$15 million for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Restoration Irrigation Mitigation Act program for FY 2020.

Sincerely,
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Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States Senate Appropriations Committee,
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
April 26, 2019

RE: FY20 Budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Works

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is concerned about continued reductions to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Civil Works budget and is requesting appropriations for this program be at least **\$5.5 billion** in FY20. The USACE Civil Works program addresses vital water resource needs throughout the nation, and in Oregon, the USACE Northwestern Division operates on our two largest river systems, the Columbia River and the Willamette River, as well as maintaining Oregon's coastal rivers for navigation. OWRC is concerned that the FY20 budget for the USACE Civil Works budget will be woefully inadequate to meet the growing water infrastructure needs of Oregon and our nation. Increased funding would help support and leverage collaborative state level planning efforts USACE is engaged in Oregon and nationwide.

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 and manage complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower facilities.

Our members across Oregon face challenges related to irrigation water supply reliability and aging infrastructure. While there are common concerns and interests throughout irrigated agriculture, each basin is unique, and necessitates that local communities' work together to identify their needs and develop solutions to best meet them. The two largest river systems in Oregon (the Columbia River and the Willamette River) are managed by USACE and play a vital role in providing not only water supplies for agriculture, but also ports and passage for transporting food and fiber globally, flood protection for communities, fish and wildlife benefits, hydropower production, and recreation. Additional funding for the Civil Works budget is needed to ensure USACE has the necessary resources to meet the myriad of infrastructure needs of those systems, without placing the entire burden on the backs of the farmers and ranchers who produce food and fiber for our nation.

FY20 Appropriations

We recognize that we must make strategic investments with scarce resources. The USACE Civil Works program is a perfect example of a budget that should have funding increased because the water infrastructure it encompasses directly contributes to the economy as well protecting public safety and the environment. The Civil Works program includes the development, management and restoration of water resources related to supply, navigability, flood control, hydropower, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat across the nation. OWRC feels strongly USACE needs

substantially increased funding to provide critical repairs on our nation's aging water infrastructure to prevent catastrophic failure, as well as address routine operations and maintenance on other infrastructure before it becomes irreparable.

Willamette Basin Reservoir Study

OWRC is currently collaborating with a broad water resources constituency to explore options related to the potential reallocation of stored water in the Willamette Basin dams operated by the USACE. The Portland District of the USACE Northwestern Division operates 13 dams and reservoirs in the Willamette Basin, with a combined storage capacity of over 1.6 million acre-feet. The dams were constructed primarily to protect downstream communities from flooding but also store and release water for irrigation, hydropower generation, water quality, fish and wildlife flows, and recreation. Currently, only a small portion of the stored water is under contract for irrigation (through the US Bureau of Reclamation) and there is not a specific amount of space allocated for a specific use in the reservoirs.

Since the construction of the dams in the 1930s, Oregon has seen an increase in population, which in turn has spurred increased development, agriculture and a whole host of new demands on the reservoirs. Municipal water entities would like access to available stored water to better meet drinking water needs for growing communities as well as businesses such as the high-tech industry. Additionally, there are fish and wildlife species in the river system listed under the Endangered Species Act and related ecosystem restoration needs not contemplated when the facilities were constructed. As a result, there is strong interest within Oregon to continue the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study and determine how the reservoirs can best help meet the myriad of current and future water demands in the Willamette Basin.

The State of Oregon, through the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), has been working cooperatively with USACE for several years and has provided a 50% funding match (up to \$1.5 million) related to the study. USACE has thus far met its internal deadlines for demonstrating progress, and while some research and modeling has been conducted there remains a need for more time and discussion to develop a balanced and implementable solution. In November 2017, USACE issued a draft Feasibility Study and a tentatively selected plan for the Willamette Project. Subsequently, a lawsuit was filed in March 2018 alleging that USACE (and National Marine Fisheries Service) operations of the Willamette dams are jeopardizing listed species and critical habitat for wild Chinook and wild winter steelhead. There is uncertainty about how this litigation will impact the Willamette Reservoir Study process, but it is still important to continue discussions between USACE, the State of Oregon, and the diverse group of stakeholders who remain committed to a balanced outcome to meet current and future agricultural, municipal/industrial, and fish and wildlife needs.

OWRC would like to see continued funding to support ongoing efforts related to the study included in the USACE Civil Works budget FY20, and the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study incorporated into the USACE FY20 work plan. Given the complexity of the Willamette system and the diverse benefits provided, it is crucial to ensure that any reallocation decision is carefully crafted and appropriately balances USACE core responsibilities to meet the needs of people and the environment we share. Federal funding would not only leverage scarce state resources but also the in-kind and direct contributions of other stakeholders participating in the project.

Planning Assistance to States

OWRC strongly supports providing funding for states to undertake planning activities to meet their water needs. Oregon is the model for watershed planning and does not need a new federal agency or Executive Branch office to oversee planning, however, federal funding and technical assistance is needed. Planning activities are conducted through local watershed councils, volunteer-driven organizations that work with local, state and federal agencies, economic and environmental interests, agricultural, industrial and municipal water users, local landowners, tribes, and other members of the community. There are over 60 individual watershed councils in Oregon that are already deeply engaged in watershed planning and restoration activities. Watershed planning in Oregon formally began in 1995 with the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon Recovery and Watershed Enhancement, a statewide strategy developed in response to the federal listing of several fish species. This strategy led to the creation of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), a state agency and policy oversight board that funds and promotes voluntary and collaborative efforts that “help create and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies” in 1999.

Additionally, OWRC has been an active participant and supporter of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) adopted by the Oregon Water Resources Commission in August 2012 and updated in December 2017. The IWRS continues to be an important step forward in planning for the various water needs of Oregon, but there is much more work to be done and little funding to implement. Providing funding for state-level planning activities will help support important efforts like the IWRS, and maximize the leveraging of state and federal resources, as well as providing viable models for other states to replicate. This approach will help leverage scarce financial resources at both the state and federal level while promoting cooperation and collaborative solutions to complex water resources challenges.

Additional Funding Programs

OWRC is encouraged by the recent additions to the USACE Civil Works program including funding for climate change response, dam safety and earthquake hazard reduction; however, programs as important as these should receive even more funding. Additional funding is needed to support and leverage state efforts to identify and address earthquake hazards. Oregon faces the risk of a catastrophic earthquake from the Cascadia Subduction Zone and the State is in the early stages of planning and mitigating to improve seismic resiliency. It is uncertain when or how devastating the earthquake could be, but it is clear there would be broad impacts, particularly since most infrastructure was constructed prior to the discovery of the fault and does not meet current seismic standards. Aging water infrastructure is particularly vulnerable and there is a significant need for financial and technical assistance to upgrade reservoirs and other key facilities. Without increased earthquake preparedness and dam safety funding, Oregon cannot mitigate the potential damage. We encourage the House to further fund these programs to effectively prepare the states for earthquakes and prevent widespread devastation to people and property.

Additionally, like many other Western states, Oregon has been experiencing more frequent and severe drought conditions. For Oregon, the drought stems from a lack of snowpack that serves as the natural water storage throughout the year for many farms, communities, and fish and wildlife. The impacts may take longer to show, but drought can be as devastating as earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. Impacts from prolonged drought take time to recover from and like other natural disasters, the best way to survive and help communities recover is through coordinated planning and developing diverse tools to use when these crises occur. We know from our experience working with our state agency and partner organizations in Oregon that funding for planning, feasibility, and implementation of projects to increase drought preparedness and resiliency is a cornerstone to an economically, socially and environmentally sound approach for a sustainable water future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we respectfully request the appropriation of at least \$5.5 billion for the USACE Civil Works budget for FY20. The critical nature of the water infrastructure services the USACE provides requires a budget that matches the seriousness of the national need and the importance of the water supply, navigation, public safety, and other natural resources benefits it provides. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the FY20 budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Sincerely,

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Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States Senate Appropriations Committee,
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
April 26, 2019

RE: U.S. Department of the Interior's FY20 Budget for the U.S Bureau of Reclamation

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) continues to support increased funding for the U.S Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Water and Related Resources program and requests that a minimum of \$1.5 billion be included in the FY20 Budget. OWRC would like to see at least \$50 million for the WaterSMART Initiative and we remain concerned the proposed FY20 budget for the Water and Related Resources program will be woefully insufficient to meet the diverse water supply and infrastructure needs in the 17 Western States that Reclamation serves. Additional funding would help leverage other resources and collaborative partnerships through Reclamation's WaterSMART Initiative, as well as support increased coordination between other federal agencies on ecosystem restoration, drought adaptation, and other water related challenges.

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 production. About one-half of our members are in Reclamation Projects. Additionally, most of our members have contracts with Reclamation or have been awarded grants under the WaterSMART program, which has been greatly beneficial to districts meeting agricultural needs.

Our members from across Oregon face challenges related to irrigation water supply reliability and aging infrastructure. While there are common concerns and interests throughout irrigated agriculture, each basin is unique, and necessitates that local communities' work together to identify their needs and develop solutions to best meet them. Funding programs, like the ones housed under Reclamation's Water and Related Resources programs, are valuable tools to meet the myriad of infrastructure needs throughout all our basins, without placing the entire burden on the backs of the agricultural economy that produces food and fiber for our nation.

WaterSMART Initiative

OWRC strongly supports Reclamation's ongoing WaterSMART Initiative and increased funding for the WaterSMART Grants and Water Conservation Field Services Programs—the two programs used the most by Oregon's irrigation districts to support water conservation activities. These programs are an important part of the overall funding package for water resources projects collaboratively developed by local communities, supported with local and state funding, and designed to meet those communities' unique needs while still meeting the goal of water conservation.

Water Conservation Field Services Program (WCFSP)

The WCFSP is a key component in supporting irrigation districts' and similar water delivery systems' water conservation efforts. In the past the WCFSP has provided a breadth of technical assistance to irrigation districts and provided partial funding for materials used to pipe and line

canals, measurement and other technology, and water conservation plans—all supporting water conservation efforts being implemented by these districts. While we are supportive of exploring innovative ways to utilize reclaimed and reused water, we continue to be concerned about funding a few expensive projects in limited areas while there are large unmet needs in the other WaterSMART programs. Providing increased funding for WCFSP projects will yield more immediate and cost-effective water conservation measures in all 17 Western States.

The planning projects and technical assistance funded under the WCFSP are key components that help our member districts identify opportunities for water conservation through improved water management and capital investments. A lack of funding for the feasibility phase of projects is an impediment to the districts' ability to move forward with implementing water conservation projects like those listed below. This program provides seed money for both short and long-term planning by districts and water users that results in helping Oregon meet the competing demands for water in basins throughout the state. Furthermore, technical assistance under this program can help water suppliers plan for and adapt to potential impacts from drought.

Additionally, we believe the management of the WCFSP should remain with the Regional Offices in order to retain the close connection between Reclamation and Project managers and ensure Reclamation's resources are used to best support the management of its Projects. The WCFSP is one of the Reclamation services most appreciated by our members. The regional staff, and particularly the local area office staff, understand the unique operating and delivery challenges of the various Projects, and therefore provide very meaningful support to the managers of those Projects.

WaterSMART Grants

WaterSMART cost-share grants have supported Oregon districts' efforts to improve water delivery systems, conserve water, and implement innovative projects to meet the water needs in our state. These projects have been a key ingredient to the districts' cooperative efforts with other stakeholders in their respective river basins to address in-stream, water quality, and water supply needs of their basins, without reducing the amount of land to which the districts deliver water, and avoiding regulatory actions by federal or state agencies. There continues to be more applicants than available funding and additional financial resources are needed to enable local water suppliers to continue their work to conserve water and help meet the Secretary's water conservation goal. With a return of over \$5 for every \$1 of federal investment, and non-federal match generally exceeding the required amount, this program far surpasses the results of other partnerships between the federal government and local project sponsors.

Examples of Oregon Projects Funded through the WaterSMART Initiative

The following projects are examples of how Reclamation's WaterSMART Initiative is helping Oregon districts. These projects were awarded funding in 2018 through the Cooperative Watershed Management Program, Water and Energy Efficiency Grants program, and Small-Scale Water Efficiency grants. More projects like these could be developed and implemented with additional federal support through the WaterSMART Program.

- ***Santiam Water Control District, North Santiam Watershed Management Program*** - The Santiam Water Control District will complete stakeholder outreach to increase stakeholder participation and engagement and complete watershed restoration planning in the North Santiam Watershed, located on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains in Western Oregon. Waterways in the Santiam Watershed exceed summer temperatures for salmonid

survival, and much of the high-quality fish habitat is located above major fish passage barriers. The District will work with municipalities, irrigation districts, Federal, state, and county natural resources agencies, tribes, industry, and local communities to prioritize restoration projects, such as instream habitat enhancement and fish passage barrier removal. The District will engage stakeholder groups through one-on-one meetings and small group presentations, and planning efforts will build on their existing WaterSMART Drought Contingency Plan. **Reclamation Funding: \$100,000 Total Project Cost: \$100,000**

- ***Talent Irrigation District, Ashland Main Canal Plummer Piping*** - The Talent Irrigation District located in southwest Oregon will replace a 360-foot segment of the Ashland Main Canal with an enclosed pipe. This will improve the flow of water by reducing friction within the delivery system, reduce the likelihood of canal failure, increase the efficiency of the water delivery system, and reduce water loss from leaks, seepage, and evaporation. This project implements a goal identified in the district's 2018 Water Management and Conservation Plan. **Reclamation Funding: \$26,046 Total Project Cost: \$52,093**
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- ***West Extension Irrigation District, Boardman East Piping and Pressurization Water Conservation Project*** - The West Extension Irrigation District, on the Columbia River near Umatilla, Oregon, will convert 4.5 miles of open lateral to buried pipe, eliminate 1.5 miles of open lateral, and install three pump stations for metered, pressurized irrigation water delivery. The project is expected to result in annual water savings of 771 acre-feet, which is currently lost to seepage, evaporation, and operational losses. Conserved water will increase drought resiliency in the water system. **Reclamation Funding: \$530,000 Total Project Cost: \$1,178,665**

Further innovative projects like the ones above could be developed and implemented in Oregon if more funding is made available through the WaterSMART Initiative. Additionally, OWRC would like to see the funding cap increased from \$1 million to \$5 million in areas where there are known endangered, threatened or vulnerable species. By increasing the funding cap, Reclamation would have the ability to fund projects aimed at improving species habitat at a higher level, allowing for these important projects to move forward.

Ecosystem Restoration

Additional funding to support collaborative ecosystem restoration efforts that align with the environmental aspects of Reclamation's mission is also important to OWRC and its members. Funding for the Columbia and Snake River Salmon Recovery Program is essential as

Reclamation, the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and NOAA Fisheries prepare to implement reasonable and prudent alternatives to mitigate impacts to Columbia-Snake river salmon and steelhead under the new federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion. We strongly encourage Reclamation to consider funding for fish passage and fish screening projects that can help meet these requirements. This type of funding could be leveraged with state and local efforts to maximize cost effectiveness and environmental benefits.

Furthermore, funding for the ongoing efforts in the Deschutes Basin related to the development of the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) should be included in Reclamation's FY20 budget. Specifically, funding similar to that received by the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project should be allocated to North Unit Irrigation District and Ochoco Irrigation District for continued work on development of the HCP and for implementation of conservation measures and monitoring the effects of the conservation measures developed under the HCP. This funding will help support ongoing efforts to improve water supplies to meet the myriad of agricultural and environmental needs that depend upon it. Financial support for these types of collaborative restoration efforts will lead to implementable, cost-effective water resources solutions that help reduce conflict and expensive litigation.

Drought Planning and Aging Infrastructure

OWRC is supportive of developing strategies to address potential drought related impacts to water resources. It is imperative that the nation's water infrastructure is capable of handling more frequent and severe weather events, changes in precipitation/snowpack, and other drought related impacts to water resources. Reclamation needs additional funding to coordinate and leverage state, local and other federal resources to support necessary evaluations and improvements of water infrastructure in the 17 Western States related to potential drought effects. Many of the 824 dams and reservoirs that Reclamation manages (and associated delivery systems) were built 50 to 100 years ago and are already in dire need of improvement. These improvements are costly and deferred maintenance leads to reduced system efficiency, decreased water conservation, and in some instances catastrophic failure.

Providing funding to evaluate and improve water infrastructure in the face of drought will ensure that Reclamation reservoirs and associated delivery systems can continue to provide essential water supplies used to grow food and other agricultural crops—a vital part of our local, state, and national economy, as well as ensuring food security. Reclamation's WaterSMART Basin Study program has proved to be an effective tool for analyzing the effects of drought. Past and future studies will prepare river basins throughout the 17 Western States for developing solutions to water shortages through conservation as well as building innovative new storage facilities, large and small.

We respectfully request the appropriation of at least \$1.5 billion for Reclamation's Water and Related Resources program for FY2020. Providing increased funding for the WaterSMART Initiative and other related programs is a wise investment that will yield benefits for our nation's economy, environment, and communities that depend on water resources. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the FY2020 budget for the U.S Bureau of Reclamation.

Sincerely,
April Snell, Executive Director

Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States House Appropriations Committee,
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

April 12, 2019

RE: FY20 Budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Works

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is concerned about continued reductions to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Civil Works budget and is requesting appropriations for this program be at least **\$5.5 billion** in FY20. The USACE Civil Works program addresses vital water resource needs throughout the nation, and in Oregon, the USACE Northwestern Division operates on our two largest river systems, the Columbia River and the Willamette River, as well as maintaining Oregon's coastal rivers for navigation. OWRC is concerned that the FY20 budget for the USACE Civil Works budget will be woefully inadequate to meet the growing water infrastructure needs of Oregon and our nation. Increased funding would help support and leverage collaborative state level planning efforts USACE is engaged in Oregon and nationwide.

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 and manage complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower facilities.

Our members across Oregon face challenges related to irrigation water supply reliability and aging infrastructure. While there are common concerns and interests throughout irrigated agriculture, each basin is unique, and necessitates that local communities' work together to identify their needs and develop solutions to best meet them. The two largest river systems in Oregon (the Columbia River and the Willamette River) are managed by USACE and play a vital role in providing not only water supplies for agriculture, but also ports and passage for transporting food and fiber globally, flood protection for communities, fish and wildlife benefits, hydropower production, and recreation. Additional funding for the Civil Works budget is needed to ensure USACE has the necessary resources to meet the myriad of infrastructure needs of those systems, without placing the entire burden on the backs of the farmers and ranchers who produce food and fiber for our nation.

FY20 Appropriations

We recognize that we must make strategic investments with scarce resources. The USACE Civil Works program is a perfect example of a budget that should have funding increased because the water infrastructure it encompasses directly contributes to the economy as well protecting public safety and the environment. The Civil Works program includes the development, management and restoration of water resources related to supply, navigability, flood control, hydropower, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat across the nation. OWRC feels strongly USACE

needs substantially increased funding to provide critical repairs on our nation's aging water infrastructure to prevent catastrophic failure, as well as address routine operations and maintenance on other infrastructure before it becomes irreparable.

Willamette Basin Reservoir Study

OWRC is currently collaborating with a broad water resources constituency to explore options related to the potential reallocation of stored water in the Willamette Basin dams operated by the USACE. The Portland District of the USACE Northwestern Division operates 13 dams and reservoirs in the Willamette Basin, with a combined storage capacity of over 1.6 million acre-feet. The dams were constructed primarily to protect downstream communities from flooding but also store and release water for irrigation, hydropower generation, water quality, fish and wildlife flows, and recreation. Currently, only a small portion of the stored water is under contract for irrigation (through the US Bureau of Reclamation) and there is not a specific amount of space allocated for a specific use in the reservoirs.

Since the construction of the dams in the 1930s, Oregon has seen an increase in population, which in turn has spurred increased development, agriculture and a whole host of new demands on the reservoirs. Municipal water entities would like access to available stored water to better meet drinking water needs for growing communities as well as businesses such as the high-tech industry. Additionally, there are fish and wildlife species in the river system listed under the Endangered Species Act and related ecosystem restoration needs not contemplated when the facilities were constructed. As a result, there is strong interest within Oregon to continue the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study and determine how the reservoirs can best help meet the myriad of current and future water demands in the Willamette Basin.

The State of Oregon, through the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), has been working cooperatively with USACE for several years and has provided a 50% funding match (up to \$1.5 million) related to the study. USACE has thus far met its internal deadlines for demonstrating progress, and while some research and modeling has been conducted there remains a need for more time and discussion to develop a balanced and implementable solution. In November 2017, USACE issued a draft Feasibility Study and a tentatively selected plan for the Willamette Project. Subsequently, a lawsuit was filed in March 2018 alleging that USACE (and National Marine Fisheries Service) operations of the Willamette dams are jeopardizing listed species and critical habitat for wild Chinook and wild winter steelhead. There is uncertainty about how this litigation will impact the Willamette Reservoir Study process, but it is still important to continue discussions between USACE, the State of Oregon, and the diverse group of stakeholders who remain committed to a balanced outcome to meet current and future agricultural, municipal/industrial, and fish and wildlife needs.

OWRC would like to see continued funding to support ongoing efforts related to the study included in the USACE Civil Works budget FY20, and the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study incorporated into the USACE FY20 work plan. Given the complexity of the Willamette system and the diverse benefits provided, it is crucial to ensure that any reallocation decision is carefully crafted and appropriately balances USACE core responsibilities to meet the needs of people and the environment we share. Federal funding would not only leverage scarce state

resources but also the in-kind and direct contributions of other stakeholders participating in the project.

Planning Assistance to States

OWRC strongly supports providing funding for states to undertake planning activities to meet their water needs. Oregon is the model for watershed planning and does not need a new federal agency or Executive Branch office to oversee planning, however, federal funding and technical assistance is needed. Planning activities are conducted through local watershed councils, volunteer-driven organizations that work with local, state and federal agencies, economic and environmental interests, agricultural, industrial and municipal water users, local landowners, tribes, and other members of the community. There are over 60 individual watershed councils in Oregon that are already deeply engaged in watershed planning and restoration activities. Watershed planning in Oregon formally began in 1995 with the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon Recovery and Watershed Enhancement, a statewide strategy developed in response to the federal listing of several fish species. This strategy led to the creation of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), a state agency and policy oversight board that funds and promotes voluntary and collaborative efforts that “help create and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies” in 1999.

Additionally, OWRC has been an active participant and supporter of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRs) adopted by the Oregon Water Resources Commission in August 2012 and updated in December 2017. The IWRs continues to be an important step forward in planning for the various water needs of Oregon, but there is much more work to be done and little funding to implement. Providing funding for state-level planning activities will help support important efforts like the IWRs, and maximize the leveraging of state and federal resources, as well as providing viable models for other states to replicate. This approach will help leverage scarce financial resources at both the state and federal level while promoting cooperation and collaborative solutions to complex water resources challenges.

Additional Funding Programs

OWRC is encouraged by the recent additions to the USACE Civil Works program including funding for climate change response, dam safety and earthquake hazard reduction; however, programs as important as these should receive even more funding. Additional funding is needed to support and leverage state efforts to identify and address earthquake hazards. Oregon faces the risk of a catastrophic earthquake from the Cascadia Subduction Zone and the State is in the early stages of planning and mitigating to improve seismic resiliency. It is uncertain when or how devastating the earthquake could be, but it is clear there would be broad impacts, particularly since most infrastructure was constructed prior to the discovery of the fault and does not meet current seismic standards. Aging water infrastructure is particularly vulnerable and there is a significant need for financial and technical assistance to upgrade reservoirs and other key facilities. Without increased earthquake preparedness and dam safety funding, Oregon cannot mitigate the potential damage. We encourage the House to further fund these programs to effectively prepare the states for earthquakes and prevent widespread devastation to people and property.

Additionally, like many other Western states, Oregon has been experiencing more frequent and severe drought conditions. For Oregon, the drought stems from a lack of snowpack that serves as the natural water storage throughout the year for many farms, communities, and fish and wildlife. The impacts may take longer to show, but drought can be as devastating as earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. Impacts from prolonged drought take time to recover from and like other natural disasters, the best way to survive and help communities recover is through coordinated planning and developing diverse tools to use when these crises occur. We know from our experience working with our state agency and partner organizations in Oregon that funding for planning, feasibility, and implementation of projects to increase drought preparedness and resiliency is a cornerstone to an economically, socially and environmentally sound approach for a sustainable water future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we respectfully request the appropriation of at least \$5.5 billion for the USACE Civil Works budget for FY20. The critical nature of the water infrastructure services the USACE provides requires a budget that matches the seriousness of the national need and the importance of the water supply, navigation, public safety, and other natural resources benefits it provides. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the FY20 budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Sincerely,

April Snell, Executive Director

Phone: 503-363-0121 Address: 795 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States House Appropriations Committee,
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
April 12, 2019

RE: U.S. Department of the Interior's FY20 Budget for the Bureau of Reclamation

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) continues to support increased funding for the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Water and Related Resources program and requests that a minimum of \$1.5 billion be included in the FY20 Budget. OWRC would like to see at least \$50 million for the WaterSMART Initiative and we remain concerned the proposed FY20 budget for the Water and Related Resources program will be woefully insufficient to meet the diverse water supply and infrastructure needs in the 17 Western States that Reclamation serves. Additional funding would help leverage other resources and collaborative partnerships through Reclamation's WaterSMART Initiative, as well as support increased coordination between other federal agencies on ecosystem restoration, drought adaptation, and other water related challenges.

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 production. About one-half of our members are in Reclamation Projects. Additionally, most of our members have contracts with Reclamation or have been awarded grants under the WaterSMART program, which has been greatly beneficial to districts meeting agricultural needs.

Our members from across Oregon face challenges related to irrigation water supply reliability and aging infrastructure. While there are common concerns and interests throughout irrigated agriculture, each basin is unique, and necessitates that local communities' work together to identify their needs and develop solutions to best meet them. Funding programs, like the ones housed under Reclamation's Water and Related Resources programs, are valuable tools to meet the myriad of infrastructure needs throughout all our basins, without placing the entire burden on the backs of the agricultural economy that produces food and fiber for our nation.

WaterSMART Initiative

OWRC strongly supports Reclamation's ongoing WaterSMART Initiative and increased funding for the WaterSMART Grants and Water Conservation Field Services Programs—the two programs used the most by Oregon's irrigation districts to support water conservation activities. These programs are an important part of the overall funding package for water resources projects collaboratively developed by local communities, supported with local and state funding, and designed to meet those communities' unique needs while still meeting the goal of water conservation.

Water Conservation Field Services Program (WCFSP)

The WCFSP is a key component in supporting irrigation districts' and similar water delivery systems' water conservation efforts. In the past the WCFSP has provided a breadth of technical assistance to irrigation districts and provided partial funding for materials used to pipe and line

canals, measurement and other technology, and water conservation plans—all supporting water conservation efforts being implemented by these districts. While we are supportive of exploring innovative ways to utilize reclaimed and reused water, we continue to be concerned about funding a few expensive projects in limited areas while there are large unmet needs in the other WaterSMART programs. Providing increased funding for WCFSP projects will yield more immediate and cost-effective water conservation measures in all 17 Western States.

The planning projects and technical assistance funded under the WCFSP are key components that help our member districts identify opportunities for water conservation through improved water management and capital investments. A lack of funding for the feasibility phase of projects is an impediment to the districts' ability to move forward with implementing water conservation projects like those listed below. This program provides seed money for both short and long-term planning by districts and water users that results in helping Oregon meet the competing demands for water in basins throughout the state. Furthermore, technical assistance under this program can help water suppliers plan for and adapt to potential impacts from drought.

Additionally, we believe the management of the WCFSP should remain with the Regional Offices in order to retain the close connection between Reclamation and Project managers and ensure Reclamation's resources are used to best support the management of its Projects. The WCFSP is one of the Reclamation services most appreciated by our members. The regional staff, and particularly the local area office staff, understand the unique operating and delivery challenges of the various Projects, and therefore provide very meaningful support to the managers of those Projects.

WaterSMART Grants

WaterSMART cost-share grants have supported Oregon districts' efforts to improve water delivery systems, conserve water, and implement innovative projects to meet the water needs in our state. These projects have been a key ingredient to the districts' cooperative efforts with other stakeholders in their respective river basins to address in-stream, water quality, and water supply needs of their basins, without reducing the amount of land to which the districts deliver water, and avoiding regulatory actions by federal or state agencies. There continues to be more applicants than available funding and additional financial resources are needed to enable local water suppliers to continue their work to conserve water and help meet the Secretary's water conservation goal. With a return of over \$5 for every \$1 of federal investment, and non-federal match generally exceeding the required amount, this program far surpasses the results of other partnerships between the federal government and local project sponsors.

Examples of Oregon Projects Funded through the WaterSMART Initiative

The following projects are examples of how Reclamation's WaterSMART Initiative is helping Oregon districts. These projects were awarded funding in 2018 through the Cooperative Watershed Management Program, Water and Energy Efficiency Grants program, and Small-Scale Water Efficiency grants. More projects like these could be developed and implemented with additional federal support through the WaterSMART Program.

- ***Santiam Water Control District, North Santiam Watershed Management Program*** - The Santiam Water Control District will complete stakeholder outreach to increase stakeholder participation and engagement and complete watershed restoration planning in the North Santiam Watershed, located on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains in Western Oregon. Waterways in the Santiam Watershed exceed summer temperatures for salmonid

survival, and much of the high-quality fish habitat is located above major fish passage barriers. The District will work with municipalities, irrigation districts, Federal, state, and county natural resources agencies, tribes, industry, and local communities to prioritize restoration projects, such as instream habitat enhancement and fish passage barrier removal. The District will engage stakeholder groups through one-on-one meetings and small group presentations, and planning efforts will build on their existing WaterSMART Drought Contingency Plan. **Reclamation Funding: \$100,000 Total Project Cost: \$100,000**

- ***Talent Irrigation District, Ashland Main Canal Plummer Piping*** - The Talent Irrigation District located in southwest Oregon will replace a 360-foot segment of the Ashland Main Canal with an enclosed pipe. This will improve the flow of water by reducing friction within the delivery system, reduce the likelihood of canal failure, increase the efficiency of the water delivery system, and reduce water loss from leaks, seepage, and evaporation. This project implements a goal identified in the district's 2018 Water Management and Conservation Plan. **Reclamation Funding: \$26,046 Total Project Cost: \$52,093**
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Further innovative projects like the ones above could be developed and implemented in Oregon if more funding is made available through the WaterSMART Initiative. Additionally, OWRC would like to see the funding cap increased from \$1 million to \$5 million in areas where there are known endangered, threatened or vulnerable species. By increasing the funding cap, Reclamation would have the ability to fund projects aimed at improving species habitat at a higher level, allowing for these important projects to move forward.

Ecosystem Restoration

Additional funding to support collaborative ecosystem restoration efforts that align with the environmental aspects of Reclamation's mission is also important to OWRC and its members. Funding for the Columbia and Snake River Salmon Recovery Program is essential as

Reclamation, the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and NOAA Fisheries prepare to implement reasonable and prudent alternatives to mitigate impacts to Columbia-Snake river salmon and steelhead under the new federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion. We strongly encourage Reclamation to consider funding for fish passage and fish screening projects that can help meet these requirements. This type of funding could be leveraged with state and local efforts to maximize cost effectiveness and environmental benefits.

Furthermore, funding for the ongoing efforts in the Deschutes Basin related to the development of the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) should be included in Reclamation's FY20 budget. Specifically, funding similar to that received by the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project should be allocated to North Unit Irrigation District and Ochoco Irrigation District for continued work on development of the HCP and for implementation of conservation measures and monitoring the effects of the conservation measures developed under the HCP. This funding will help support ongoing efforts to improve water supplies to meet the myriad of agricultural and environmental needs that depend upon it. Financial support for these types of collaborative restoration efforts will lead to implementable, cost-effective water resources solutions that help reduce conflict and expensive litigation.

Drought Planning and Aging Infrastructure

OWRC is supportive of developing strategies to address potential drought related impacts to water resources. It is imperative that the nation's water infrastructure is capable of handling more frequent and severe weather events, changes in precipitation/snowpack, and other drought related impacts to water resources. Reclamation needs additional funding to coordinate and leverage state, local and other federal resources to support necessary evaluations and improvements of water infrastructure in the 17 Western States related to potential drought effects. Many of the 824 dams and reservoirs that Reclamation manages (and associated delivery systems) were built 50 to 100 years ago and are already in dire need of improvement. These improvements are costly and deferred maintenance leads to reduced system efficiency, decreased water conservation, and in some instances catastrophic failure.

Providing funding to evaluate and improve water infrastructure in the face of drought will ensure that Reclamation reservoirs and associated delivery systems can continue to provide essential water supplies used to grow food and other agricultural crops—a vital part of our local, state, and national economy, as well as ensuring food security. Reclamation's WaterSMART Basin Study program has proved to be an effective tool for analyzing the effects of drought. Past and future studies will prepare river basins throughout the 17 Western States for developing solutions to water shortages through conservation as well as building innovative new storage facilities, large and small.

We respectfully request the appropriation of at least \$1.5 billion for Reclamation's Water and Related Resources program for FY20. Providing increased funding for the WaterSMART Initiative and other related programs is a wise investment that will yield benefits for our nation's economy, environment, and communities that depend on water resources. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the FY20 budget for the U.S Bureau of Reclamation.

Sincerely,

April Snell, Executive Director

Phone: 503-363-0121 Address: 795 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Testimony submitted to the United States Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

April 12, 2019

RE: FY 2020 Budget for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) strongly supports funding of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. It is crucial that the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) has adequate resources and we request a minimum of \$300 million to leverage partnerships and tackle the complex natural resources conservation issues facing the nation. Furthermore, we are strongly supportive of coordinated federal agency watershed planning, and request funding for the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program (under PL-566), at a minimum of \$200 million in FY 2020.

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 production.

Our members from across Oregon face challenges related to irrigation water supply reliability and aging infrastructure. While there are common concerns and interests throughout irrigated agriculture, each basin is unique, and necessitates that local communities' work together to identify their needs and develop solutions to best meet them. Funding programs, like the ones housed under the USDA NRCS programs are valuable tools to meet the myriad of infrastructure needs throughout all our basins, without placing the entire burden on the backs of the agricultural economy that produces food and fiber for our nation.

RCPP Benefits & Needs

OWRC strongly supports robust funding for NRCS programs, particularly the RCPP, which is a critical tool for districts and other agricultural water suppliers in developing and implementing water and energy conservation projects in Oregon. While we understand the need to streamline federal agency activities and programs, it is our hope that essential programs like the RCPP continue to receive the additional funding that is still needed to meet program demands. In the past, related NRCS programs, such as the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), have been highly successful in developing cooperative approaches for Federal, State and Local interests to address Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) issues in watershed basins and sub basins. Those programs helped catalyze conservation efforts that live on in the RCPP today. RCPP currently has over 2,000 partners engaged in locally-led conservation efforts that help implement collaborative basin-level solutions and reduce detrimental legal action, resulting in better outcomes for all.

Federal support of water conservation activities funded through NRCS programs, including the RCPP, is essential to the conservation of our natural resources and critical to protecting our food, energy and water supply. In 2018, USDA invested \$220 million in innovative conservation partnerships, funding 91 high-impact projects across the country, including projects that will address water quality and drought like the Oregon projects described below. Irrigation districts in Oregon are the model of successful RCPP projects that “innovate, leverage additional contributions, offer impactful solutions and engage more participants.” More projects like this could be developed and implemented in Oregon and throughout the nation with additional federal support through the RCPP.

- ***East Fork Irrigation District (EFID) Watershed Restoration*** – EFID, with a diverse set of partners in the Hood River Watershed in the Columbia River Basin, will focus on a top-priority water conservation and fish habitat project in the Lower East Fork Hood River. EFID and its partners will construct Phase 1 of the Eastside Lateral pipeline project, assist agricultural producers with approximately 400 acres of on-farm water conservation practices and educate producers and farm workers on the latest irrigation water management techniques. The project will also restore one mile of spawning and rearing habitat on the East Fork Hood River for threatened steelhead, spring Chinook, and coho. The project will increase irrigation water reliability for high value food crops, improve resilience to drought, and restore instream habitat for ESA listed species.
RCPP Funding: \$2,033,000, Project Timeline: 2018-2022
- ***Wallowa Lake Irrigation Modernization, Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA)*** – This project will address water quantity, water quality, and inadequate habitat resource concerns in the Prairie Creek area of Wallowa County, Oregon. This project proposes to pipe 11.8 miles of private ditches, install water control structures/fish screens on newly piped ditches and install up to ten new sprinkler systems to increase on-farm conveyance and application efficiency. The actions will improve water conveyance and application efficiency, reduce fish entrainment risk decrease return flows into Prairie Creek and the Wallowa River, and decrease sediment, nutrient, and bacteria inputs into Prairie Creek and the Wallowa River. FCA and its partners seek to benefit threatened or endangered populations of spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead trout and bull trout.
RCPP Funding: \$1,730,000, Project Timeline: 2018-2021
- ***Lower Crooked River Strategic Restoration*** – This is a comprehensive project, led by the Crooked River Watershed Council, intended to address degraded fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and riparian plant communities over 17 miles of the Crooked River in Central Oregon. Proposed restoration activities include both instream and riparian restoration to improve habitat for fish and wildlife, water quality, and agricultural productivity. In addition, the project will reduce the threat of regulatory enforcement associated with the Federal Endangered Species Act and compliance with non-point source impacts from agriculture under Sections 303 and 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act. **RCPP Funding: \$7,091,000, Project Timeline: 2018-2022**

- ***Three Sisters Irrigation District (TSID) Innovation*** - TSID in the Deschutes Basin, Oregon, with government, private industry and nonprofit partners will implement multiple innovative projects to mitigate drought, improve water quality/quantity and improve fish habitat as part of the Whychus Creek Collaborative Conservation Project. The project includes the completion of piping Watson McKenzie Main Canal, resulting in the conservation of 800 acre-feet of annual canal seepage loss. The on-farm component of this project will encompass 61 projects, over 1500 acres, in the Upper District, allowing farmers to pipe private laterals, thereby providing access to pressurized water from the District's pipeline. Pressurized water will eliminate electrical pumps that use over 2.5 million kWh of electricity annually. A feasibility study will be conducted to determine the potential for 60 on-farm hydro net metering projects. This project will allow TSID to mitigate drought by piping the entire District.
RCPP Funding: \$990,604, Project Timeline: 2017-2022

OWRC also continues to support funding for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), in accordance with the 2018 Farm Bill. As demonstrated by the huge demand for RCPP funding, programs like EQIP need to remain in light of the need for investment in conservation projects. It is essential the EQIP have at least \$2 billion in appropriations funding if Congress would like to see widespread results. Furthermore, with the numerous new and potential listings under ESA and increased water regulations under the CWA, there is a dire need for additional funding to support conservation efforts nationwide.

RCPP helps fill a funding void for multi-partner conservation projects and allow farmers to pool together and leverage the dollars invested in the off-farm project with the addition of EQIP on-farm projects. The effects of drought combined with ESA and CWA regulation has created a daunting set of circumstances for irrigated agriculture in the West. RCPP and EQIP have become an essential lifeline for farmers to adapt to drought. It is critical to increase funding for new eligible RCPP projects that maximize economic investment while benefiting the environment and alleviating some of the negative effects of drought.

Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program and Watershed Planning Needs

OWRC also strongly supports the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program. Two of our members, Sutherlin Water Control District (SWCD) and Middle Fork Irrigation District (MFID) have dams that were built under PL-566. SWCD and MFID have received funds to begin the long and expensive process of updating their 50-year-old dams to today's standards for safety, however; both districts will need continued funding from the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program to fully update their infrastructure.

SWCD has two dams built under PL-566 and while they were built to seismic standards 50 years ago, they do not meet today's standards for earthquakes. SWCD's dams serve as multi-purpose storage for the community; providing flood control, irrigation water, municipal water and recreation. To date, SWCD has been authorized to receive funding for planning, design and construction of one of their dams and planning and design on the other. However, SWCD will still need considerable funding dollars to complete construction on the second dam.

MFID is responsible for the management and maintenance of Clear Branch Dam, a PL-566 dam within the Hood River watershed, which provides a clean, dependable water supply and distribution system for the irrigation of pears, apples, cherries and other high value crops. Rehabilitation of the dam is needed to protect the public from flooding, for access to a clean and dependable water supply, and to maintain agricultural productivity. Rehabilitation of Clear Branch Dam will improve fish passage connectivity for ESA threatened Bull Trout and improve water temperature for spawning, rearing and migration.

Once planning and design studies are complete, both MFID and SWCD will know what the costs will be to make the necessary improvements to their dams, which is currently estimated at over \$10 million for both SWCD dams and \$9.45 million for MFID.

Additionally, in 2017, Senator Merkley championed increased funding within PL- 566 for Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations. The program was funded at \$150 million and included projects that benefit wildlife and irrigation. These funds are available to substantially assist Central Oregon irrigators with water conservation projects that benefit spotted frog preservation while ensuring farmers and ranchers in the region get the water they need for their operations.

Considering the high costs to fix just three of the PL-566 dams, and the immense price tag of modernizing infrastructure to increase water conservation, preserve wildlife habitat and increase water reliability for farmers and ranchers, a minimum of \$200 million is needed to fund this important program.

Our member districts, the farms and other water users they serve, and the communities in which they are located benefit greatly from the NRCS programs described in our testimony. NRCS programs are essential to irrigation districts in developing and implementing conservation projects that benefit the entire watershed and community as a whole. Furthermore, conservation projects also benefit the economy through job creation and ensuring the future viability of American agriculture. Oregon's agricultural community is actively committed to water conservation programs, but those programs require robust Federal participation if the agricultural community is to be able to continue its efforts to address Oregon's water supply needs through conservation. Increasing the budget for NRCS programs is a strategic investment that will pay both environmental and economic dividends to Oregonians and America as a whole.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed FY2020 Budget for the USDA's NRCS Programs.

Sincerely,
April Snell, Executive Director
Contact: aprils@owrc.org; 795 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Testimony submitted to the United States House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

April 5, 2019

RE: FY 2020 Budget for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) strongly supports funding of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. It is crucial that the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) has adequate resources and we request a minimum of \$300 million to leverage partnerships and tackle the complex natural resources conservation issues facing the nation. Furthermore, we are strongly supportive of coordinated federal agency watershed planning, and request funding for the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program (under PL-566), at a minimum of \$200 million in FY 2020.

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 production.

Our members from across Oregon face challenges related to irrigation water supply reliability and aging infrastructure. While there are common concerns and interests throughout irrigated agriculture, each basin is unique, and necessitates that local communities' work together to identify their needs and develop solutions to best meet them. Funding programs, like the ones housed under the USDA NRCS programs are valuable tools to meet the myriad of infrastructure needs throughout all our basins, without placing the entire burden on the backs of the agricultural economy that produces food and fiber for our nation.

RCPP Benefits & Needs

OWRC strongly supports robust funding for NRCS programs, particularly the RCPP, which is a critical tool for districts and other agricultural water suppliers in developing and implementing water and energy conservation projects in Oregon. While we understand the need to streamline federal agency activities and programs, it is our hope that essential programs like the RCPP continue to receive the additional funding that is still needed to meet program demands. In the past, related NRCS programs, such as the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), have been highly successful in developing cooperative approaches for Federal, State and Local interests to address Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) issues in watershed basins and sub basins. Those programs helped catalyze conservation efforts that live on in the RCPP today. RCPP currently has over 2,000 partners engaged in locally-led conservation efforts that help implement collaborative basin-level solutions and reduce detrimental legal action, resulting in better outcomes for all.

Federal support of water conservation activities funded through NRCS programs, including the RCPP, is essential to the conservation of our natural resources and critical to protecting our food, energy and water supply. In 2018, USDA invested \$220 million in innovative conservation partnerships, funding 91 high-impact projects across the country, including projects that will address water quality and drought like the Oregon projects described below. Irrigation districts in Oregon are the model of successful RCPP projects that “innovate, leverage additional contributions, offer impactful solutions and engage more participants.” More projects like this could be developed and implemented in Oregon and throughout the nation with additional federal support through the RCPP.

- ***East Fork Irrigation District (EFID) Watershed Restoration*** – EFID, with a diverse set of partners in the Hood River Watershed in the Columbia River Basin, will focus on a top-priority water conservation and fish habitat project in the Lower East Fork Hood River. EFID and its partners will construct Phase 1 of the Eastside Lateral pipeline project, assist agricultural producers with approximately 400 acres of on-farm water conservation practices and educate producers and farm workers on the latest irrigation water management techniques. The project will also restore one mile of spawning and rearing habitat on the East Fork Hood River for threatened steelhead, spring Chinook, and coho. The project will increase irrigation water reliability for high value food crops, improve resilience to drought, and restore instream habitat for ESA listed species.
RCPP Funding: \$2,033,000, Project Timeline: 2018-2022
- ***Wallowa Lake Irrigation Modernization, Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA)*** – This project will address water quantity, water quality, and inadequate habitat resource concerns in the Prairie Creek area of Wallowa County, Oregon. This project proposes to pipe 11.8 miles of private ditches, install water control structures/fish screens on newly piped ditches and install up to ten new sprinkler systems to increase on-farm conveyance and application efficiency. The actions will improve water conveyance and application efficiency, reduce fish entrainment risk decrease return flows into Prairie Creek and the Wallowa River, and decrease sediment, nutrient, and bacteria inputs into Prairie Creek and the Wallowa River. FCA and its partners seek to benefit threatened or endangered populations of spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead trout and bull trout.
RCPP Funding: \$1,730,000, Project Timeline: 2018-2021
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Sincerely,
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Contact: aprils@owrc.org; 795 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
March 15, 2019

**RE: FY2020 Budget for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Restoration
Irrigation Mitigation Act Program**

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is writing to express its strong support for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Restoration Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) Program and is requesting that appropriations for this program be **\$15 million** in FY2020, which is the current authorized amount. The FRIMA program is an essential cost-share funding program that helps water users and fishery agencies better protect sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish species while ensuring water supply delivery to farms and communities.

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 production.

FY2020 Appropriations

The FRIMA program meets a critical need in fishery protection and restoration, complimenting other programs through the U.S Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS). Fish passage and fish screen installations are a vital component to fishery protection with several benefits:

- Keeps sensitive, threatened and endangered fish out of canals and water delivery systems
- Allows fish to be safely bypassed around reservoirs and other infrastructure
- Eliminates water quality risks to fish species

There are over 100 irrigation districts and other special districts in Oregon that provide water supplies to over one million acres of irrigated cropland in the state. Almost all of these districts are affected by either state or federal Endangered Species Act listings of Salmon and Steelhead, Bull Trout or other sensitive, threatened or endangered species. The design and installation of fish screens and fish passage to protect the myriad of fish species is often cost-prohibitive for individual districts to implement without outside funding sources.

Oregon irrigation districts anticipate no less than \$25 million in funding to meet current fish passage and fish screen needs in our state. Limited cost-share funds are available from the Oregon Watershed Enhanced Board (OWEB) program, but the primary cost-share for fish screen and fish passage projects has been provided by the districts and their water users. Projects include construction of new fish screens and fish passage facilities as well as significant upgrades of existing facilities to meet new requirements (new species or science) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service and the FWS. Upgrades are often needed to modernize facilities with new technologies that provide better protection for fish species as well as reduced maintenance and increased lifespan for the operator.

Background of the Fisheries Restoration Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) Program

FRIMA, originally enacted November 2000, created a federal partnership program incentivizing voluntary fish screen and fish passage improvements for water withdrawal projects in Idaho, Oregon, Washington and western Montana. The funding goes to local governments for construction of fish screens and fish passage facilities and is matched with non-federal funding. Irrigation districts and other local governments that divert water for irrigation accessed the funding directly, while individual irrigators accessed funding through their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), which are local governments affiliated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The original legislation in 2000 (PL.106-502) was supported and requested by the Pacific Northwest Partnership, a coalition of local governmental entities in the four Northwest states, including OWRC. The FRIMA legislation authorized \$25 million annually, to be divided equally among the four states from 2001 to 2012, which was when the original authorization expired. The actual funding appropriated to the FRIMA program (through Congressional write-ins) ranged from \$1 million to \$8 million, well short of the \$25 million it was authorized for and far short of what is needed to address fish passage and screening needs across the region. However, that small amount of funding was used to leverage other funds and assisted the region in making measurable progress towards installing fish screens and fish passage needed to protect sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish species.

FRIMA funding was channeled through FWS to state fishery agencies in the four states, distributed using an application and approval process based on a ranking system implemented uniformly among the states, including the following factors: fish restoration benefits, cost effectiveness, and feasibility of planned structure. All projects provided improved fish passage or fish protection at water diversion structures and benefitted native fish species in the area, including several state or federally listed species. Projects were also subject to applicable state and federal requirements for project construction and operation.

FRIMA was reauthorized as part of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) of 2016. However, a fifth state, California, was also added as an eligible FRIMA cost-share recipient and the program was only reauthorized for \$15 million, well short of the estimated \$500 million in fish screening and passage needs in the Pacific Northwest alone. Now that the program has been reauthorized, it is imperative the program receive appropriations so all five states can better leverage state/local funding to meet their fish passage and screening needs.

Program Benefits

FRIMA projects provide immediate protection for fish and fills a large unmet need in the West for cost-share assistance with fish screening and fish passage installation and improvements. FWS has issued a report covering program years FY 2002-2012 that provides state-by-state break-down of how the Congressional provided funding has been used in the program. Compared to other recovery strategies, installation of fish screens and fish passage has the highest assurance for increasing numbers of fish species in the Pacific Northwest. Furthermore, the installation of these devices have minimal impacts on water delivery operations and projects are done cooperatively using methods that are well accepted by landowners and rural communities.

The return of the FRIMA program will catalyze cooperative partnerships and innovative projects that provide immediate and long-term benefits to irrigators, fishery agencies, and local communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. This program is also a wise investment, with past projects contributing more than the required match and leveraging on average over one dollar for each federal dollar invested. FRIMA provides for a maximum federal cost-share of 65%, with the applicant's cost-share at 35% plus the on-going maintenance and support of the structure for passage or screening purposes. Applicants operate the projects and the state agencies monitor and review the projects.

Oregon Projects & Benefits

Twenty-six fish screens or fish passage projects in Oregon were previously funded using FRIMA for part of the project financing. These projects have led to:

- Installation of screens at seventeen diversions or irrigation pumps
- Removal or modification of twelve fish passage barriers
- Three-hundred sixty-five miles being re-opened to fish passage

In addition, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has used some of the FRIMA funding to develop an inventory of need for fish screens and passages in the state. Grants ranged from just under \$6,000 to \$400,000 in size with a local match averaging 64% of the project costs, well over the amount required under the Act (35%). In other words, each federal dollar invested in the FRIMA program generates a local investment of just over one dollar for the protection of fish species in the Pacific Northwest.

The following are examples of how Oregon used some of its FRIMA money:

Santiam Water Control District: Fish screen project on a large 1050 cubic feet per second (cfs) multipurpose water diversion project on the Santiam River (Willamette Basin) near Stayton, Oregon. Partners are the Santiam Water Control District, ODFW, Marion Soil and Water Conservation District, and the City of Stayton. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$400,000** leveraged a **\$1,200,000** total project cost. Species benefited included winter steelhead, spring Chinook, rainbow trout, and cutthroat trout.

South Fork Little Butte Creek: Fish screen and fish passage project on a 65 cfs irrigation water diversion in the Rogue River Basin near Medford, Oregon. Partners are the Medford Irrigation District and ODFW. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$372,000** leveraged a **\$580,000** total project cost. Species benefited included listed summer and winter steelhead, coho salmon, and cutthroat trout.

Running Y (Geary Diversion): Fish screen project on a 60 cfs irrigation water diversion in the upper Klamath Basin near Klamath Falls, Oregon. Partners are the Wocus Drainage District, ODFW, and Jeld-Wen Ranches. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$44,727** leveraged a total project cost of **\$149,000**. Species benefited included listed red-band trout and short-nosed sucker.

Lakeshore Gardens: Fish screen project on a 2 cfs irrigation water diversion in the upper Klamath Basin near Klamath Falls, Oregon. Partners are the Lakeshore Gardens Drainage District and ODFW. Approved **FRIMA** funding of **\$5,691** leveraged a total project cost of **\$18,970**. Species benefited included red-band trout, short-nosed sucker and Lost River sucker.

Conclusion

Increasing appropriations for FRIMA will fill a vital funding gap for fish screens and fish passage projects that are needed to better protect sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish species, which also benefits the economy, local communities, and the environment we share. FRIMA funds projects that are ready to be constructed and will provide immediate improved protections for fish and immediate jobs for the construction of the projects. Dollar-for-dollar, providing screening and fish passage at diversions is one of the most cost-effective uses of restoration dollars, creating fishery protection at low cost, with low risk and significant benefits.

The return of a robustly funded FRIMA program will catalyze cooperative partnerships and innovative projects that provide immediate and long-term benefits to irrigators, fishery agencies, and local communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. We respectfully request an appropriation of \$15 million for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Restoration Irrigation Mitigation Act program for FY 2020.

Sincerely,

April Snell, Executive Director

Phone: 503-363-0121 Address: 795 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Testimony of April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Submitted to the United States House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
March 15, 2019

RE: FY2020 Budget for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is highly supportive of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program (CWSRF) and is requesting that appropriations for this program be increased to at least **\$2.5 billion** in FY2020. The CWSRF is an effective loan 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 production.

FY2020 Appropriations

We recognize our country must make strategic investments with scarce resources. The CWSRF is a perfect example of the type of program that should have funding increased because it creates jobs while benefitting the environment and is an efficient return on taxpayer investment. CWSRF projects also provide much needed construction and professional services jobs, particularly in rural areas facing economic hardship. 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.

In Oregon, the CWSRF is administered by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), who responsibly maintains the program through repaid loans, interest, fees, and available federal capitalization grants. According to EPA, for every \$1 of federal capitalization funding, \$3 worth of assistance is provided, leveraging available funds to maximize benefits for local communities and the environment we share. Unfortunately, available funding continues to be woefully insufficient to meet the growing water infrastructure funding needs in Oregon and nationwide.

Nationally, there are large and growing critical water infrastructure needs. In EPA's most recent survey, *The Clean Watersheds Needs Survey 2012: Report to Congress and Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment: Fifth Report to Congress*, the estimated funding need was \$384 billion (in 2011 dollars) for drinking water infrastructure and \$271 billion (in 2012 dollars) for wastewater infrastructure needs respectively. Funding for water infrastructure, specifically CWSRF, needs to be incrementally increased in order to meet these critical needs.

Background of CWSRF Usage by Irrigation Districts

Over the course of the program's 30-year history in Oregon, several OWRC member districts have successfully used CWSRF for projects that improve water quality and water quantity associated with water delivery diversions, canals and pipelines throughout the state. OWRC and our members are highly supportive of the CWSRF, including promoting the program to our members and annually submitting federal appropriations testimony to support increased funding for the CWSRF. We believe it is an important funding tool that irrigation districts and other water suppliers are using for innovative piping projects that provide multiple environmental and economic benefits.

Numerous irrigation districts and other water suppliers need to pipe currently open canals, which significantly reduces sediment, improves water temperature, and provides other water quality benefits to rivers and streams. Piping immediately improves the efficiency of the water delivery system and helps increase available water supplies for fish and irrigators alike. These projects also decrease energy consumption (from reduced pumping) and have opportunities for generating renewable energy, primarily through in-conduit hydropower. However, continually reducing the amount of funds available for these types of worthwhile projects has created increased uncertainty for potential borrowers about whether adequate funding will be available in future years. 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. Reductions in CWSRF could lead to loss of grant funding and delay or derail beneficial projects that irrigation districts have been developing for years.

We continue to be highly supportive of expanding "green infrastructure," in fact, irrigation districts and other water suppliers in Oregon are on the forefront of innovative piping projects that provide multiple environmental benefits, which is discussed in greater detail below. In 2009, four Oregon irrigation districts received over \$11 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) through the CWSRF for projects which created valuable jobs while improving water quality. These four projects were essential to DEQ not only meeting, but exceeding, the minimum requirement that 20% of the total ARRA funding for the CWSRF be used for "green" projects. Without the irrigation district projects, it is likely that Oregon's CWSRF would not have qualified for ARRA funding.

The success Oregon districts have had in using the loan program to design and implement multi-benefit projects has led to increased applications to the CWSRF. Now irrigation districts are once again eligible for a key funding element, principal forgiveness (which was reinstated with the passage of the WIIN Act in 2016 and related state rulemaking in 2017), and we expect to see even more interest in the program. OWRC is hopeful with an increase in money available, there will be enough funding available to complete projects that will not only benefit the environment and the patrons served by the water delivery system, but also benefit the economy.

CWSRF Needs in Oregon

The appropriations for the CWSRF program over the past few years has been far short of what is needed to address critical water infrastructure needs in Oregon and across the nation. This has led to fewer water infrastructure projects, and therefore a reduction in improvements to water quality and water quantity.

We are pleased to see a proposed modest increase in appropriations after several years of decreased funding and hope to see this trend continue as addressing infrastructure needs has become more expensive and even more critical. DEQ's most recent "Proposed Intended Use Plan Update #2 - State Fiscal Year 2019," lists 31 loan applications in need of a total of \$171,670,456 in Oregon alone.

The following irrigation district projects are currently ranked by DEQ in the top three by overall score and also meet several categories of the Green Reserve requirement related to improved water and energy efficiency. Increased funding will help catalyze many more projects like the ones below in Oregon and throughout the nation.

Middle Fork Irrigation District (Hood River County) \$20,000,000

Sec. 319 Design and Construction, Clear Branch Dam Rehabilitation and Coe Branch Pipeline. The district will implement multiple projects to improve water quality and quantity associated with its irrigation diversions in the Middle Fork Hood River watershed. Specific projects include: installing a new deep water outlet and improving fish passage in Laurance Lake; installing new irrigation pipe to alleviate impacts from current irrigation system and addressing return flows from the irrigation system; improving the spillway at the Clear Branch Dam; and improving irrigation efficiency by district patrons. The project meets the Green Project Reserve category 2.2-8 (water efficiency). The project is consistent with the 2014 Final Oregon Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.

Swalley Irrigation District (Deschutes County) \$16,000,000

Sec. 319 Design and Construction, Irrigation Modernization Project. This irrigation piping project includes the installation of pressurized pipe to eliminate seepage and evaporative loss from open ditches; flow regulating and metering devices at service connections; pressurized delivery to eliminate individual pumps system-wide; active education and a sprinkler exchange program. The project meets Green Project Reserve category 2.2-8 for water efficiency and category 3.2-2 for energy efficiency because piping and pressurizing the irrigation canals will result in approximately 1.1 million kWh/year in energy conservation and conserve up to 16 cubic feet per second of water during the irrigation season. The project is consistent with the 2014 Final Oregon Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.

Lone Pine Irrigation District (Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook Counties) \$ 2,000,000

Sec. 319, Design and Construction, Irrigation Modernization Project. This project will modernize district-owned canals and laterals to conserve water, improve operational efficiency, reduce electrical and energy costs, reduce O&M for farmers through decreased pumping and improve habitat in the Deschutes River. It will achieve these goals by piping all of the district's open canals using HDPE and steel pipe. The existing suspension bridge over the Crooked River is in disrepair and a new structure is needed to convey the irrigation water across the river. The district will replace the bridge with a siphon under the river. The project meets Green Project Reserve categories 2.2-8 (more efficient irrigation) and 3.2-2 (20% reduction in energy consumption) will prevent 8.8 cfs of water loss, will leave 5.2 cfs of saved water in stream and reduce energy use by 2,500,000 kW hours per year. The project is consistent with the 2014 Final Oregon Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.

The Importance of Strategic Partnerships and Local Watershed Planning

Additionally, OWRC is pleased that EPA continues “strategic partnerships” with the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and other federal agencies to improve water quality and address nonpoint source pollution. Oregon had two priority watersheds eligible for funding through the National Water Quality Initiative in 2014 and anticipates that additional watersheds will be included in the future. As Oregon is a delegated state, OWRC also feels strongly that DEQ is best situated to develop and implement activities to improve these and other impaired waterways in the state. DEQ’s administration of the CWSRF has been an extremely valuable tool in Oregon for improving water quality and efficiently addressing infrastructure challenges that are otherwise cost-prohibitive.

DEQ has recently revised Oregon’s CWSRF rules; thus making conservation easier and maximizing benefits in the State. Oregon’s success in watershed planning illustrates planning efforts work best when diverse interests develop and implement plans at the local watershed level with support from state government. As the national model for watershed planning, Oregon does not need a new federal agency or Executive Branch office to oversee conservation and restoration efforts. Planning activities are conducted through local watershed councils, volunteer-driven organizations that work with local, state and federal agencies, economic and environmental interests, agricultural, industrial and municipal water users, local landowners, tribes, and other members of the community.

There are over 60 individual watershed councils in Oregon already deeply engaged in watershed planning and restoration activities. Watershed planning in Oregon formally began in 1995 with the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon Recovery and Watershed Enhancement, a statewide strategy developed in response to the federal listing of several fish species. This strategy led to the creation of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) in 1999, a state agency and policy oversight board that funds and promotes voluntary and collaborative efforts that “help create and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.” OWEB projects that can be integrated with eligible CWSRF projects (and other state and federal funding programs) are helping revolutionize how we meet our critical water challenges and implement multi-benefit water infrastructure projects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we applaud the CWSRF program for allowing Oregon's DEQ to make targeted loans that address Clean Water Act issues and improve water quality while incentivizing innovative water management solutions that benefit local communities, agricultural economies, and the environment. This voluntary approach creates and promotes cooperation and collaborative solutions to complex water resources challenges. We respectfully request the appropriation of at least \$2.5 billion for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund for FY 2020.

Sincerely,

April Snell, Executive Director

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