

Transportation and Infrastructure Hearing: Member Day

Central Valley Water Priorities

May 1, 20219

- **Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for taking the time to hold this important hearing.**
- **I have the honor of representing California's Central Valley here in Congress.**
- **Back home, our water infrastructure is about more than just sustaining the practical drinking water needs of our own community.**
- **It's also a key to our livelihoods and our agricultural way of life.**
- **Our region's access to water allows us to deliver over half of America's fruits, nuts, and vegetables.**
- **But our water infrastructure is aging and has not kept pace with our growing population and agricultural industry - or our changing climate.**
- **This is a public safety concern for the farmers, families, and water users across the state, and it's a concern for anyone across the country who eats our produce.**
- **This is a local and a national priority - and California's unique challenges require smart investments.**
- **On the heels of the worst drought in our state's history, we have an obligation to move quickly to invest in our water infrastructure to prepare for the next one.**
- **California has the most variable rainfall in the country - we're locked into boom and bust cycles.**
- **We have to capitalize on the boom years - like we're experiencing now - to get us through the busts. The only way we can do that is by investing in important infrastructure projects.**
- **In the past, we've failed to take advantage of the boom years, and we suffered during the last drought as a result.**
- **We should have made investments in our water systems 20 years ago - but the least we can do is make those investments right now.**

- **In 2012, the American Society of Civil Engineers graded the state's levee and flood control a D, and urban runoff infrastructure and programs a D+. These ratings are unacceptable and unsustainable.**
- **And as you said before Mr. Chairman, the federal government's investments in infrastructure have not kept pace with our needs.**
- **The federal government used to pay 75% of total project costs for water infrastructure improvements. Today we pay around 5%. That's crazy**
- **That's why I announced the SAVE Water Resources Act just last week. My bill invests in water infrastructure, supports surface and groundwater storage, and ensures we build infrastructure lasts more than a few years down the road, but for the long-term.**
- **Some parts of the bill increase funding for - or reauthorize - key programs that we should prioritize as we consider a new infrastructure package.**
- **My Central Valley colleagues agree - I led a letter with five other Central Valley Members on addressing the need to:**
 - **Encourage the development of climate-resilient technologies that can withstand the impacts of severe droughts, floods, and wildfires.**
 - **Support MANY water infrastructure projects authorized in the WIIN Act, including much-needed surface and groundwater storage projects, water recycling projects, and desalination projects.**
 - **Invest in programs that support the development, management, and improvement of water projects, such as the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Civil Works program.**
 - **Expand federal financing for new water projects by authorizing and expanding the Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (WIFIA) and the Reclamation Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (RIFIA).**
 - **Funding federal programs that provide states with the financial support to encourage water infrastructure projects and projects that improve water**

quality standards, such as the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF).

- **If we commit to making these investments, we will protect not only the local needs of the Central Valley, but also our country's access to healthy, home-grown food.**
- **As our national population continues to expand, we need to continue growing food here at home.**
- **I know most people can't see beyond their dinner plates, but their food comes from places like the Central Valley. No issue is more central to our ability to grow this produce at home than our access to water.**
- **And we can't maintain this access without making important infrastructure investments in our water systems.**
- **I encourage you to prioritize investments in our failing water systems alongside our need to invest in America's roads, bridges, and transit systems by making investments in the programs which I have laid out here today.**
- **I hope to continue working alongside you to develop a better infrastructure package for the people I have the honor of representing in the Central Valley.**
- **Thank you, and I yield back.**