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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2803

COMMITTEE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & WATER DEVELOPMENT,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION,
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES

June 30, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We are writing to urge you to act swiftly on bipartisan solutions to address the critical water crisis facing the western United States. This historic drought is threatening our drinking water supply and energy generation capacity, along with putting the health of our citizens, environment, and economy at risk.

We are witnessing this water crisis grow each day in our communities. As you may know, Lake Mead, which supplies water for 25 million people across Nevada, Arizona, and California, just reached its lowest level since construction in the 1930s. Alarming, it currently stands at only 36 percent capacity. The Bureau of Reclamation is expected to declare a Level 1 shortage condition for 2022 that will result in water supply cuts for many states, including the loss of approximately one-third of the Colorado River water delivered into Central Arizona. Reclamation has already reduced water allocations for users of the Central Valley Project, which is facing the worst hydrologic conditions since 1976-77. And extreme drought conditions and low snowpack on the Rio Grande are threatening reservoir levels and water allocations. The shortages will have far-reaching impacts for our water utilities, farmers, tribal communities, and the health of our rivers and ecosystems. But the impacts of this drought will be felt far beyond these water shortages.

Lower levels in reservoirs decrease our ability to generate electricity. At the Hoover Dam, which has the capacity to produce power for 1.3 million people, generation is down by 25%. The current heat wave gripping the West is being amplified in a vicious cycle by the ongoing drought conditions, and is directly threatening the health of our citizens and resilience of our power grid. And recent projections show significant potential for wildfires throughout this summer and fall that could have devastating impacts on many communities.

We urge you to engage with Western lawmakers and stakeholders to identify and implement timely, bipartisan solutions to this crisis. This issue cannot wait. In the face of climate change's threats, we must become more resilient to drought and plan for the water supply we will likely have moving forward.

Thank you for considering our request, and for your continued leadership. We look forward to working with you to develop mitigation and adaptation solutions to the ongoing impacts of this crisis.

Sincerely,



Susie Lee (NV-3)
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford (NV-4)
Member of Congress



Mark Amodei (NV-2)
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman (CA-2)
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán (CA-44)
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ-2)
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas (CA-29)
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández (NM-03)
Member of Congress



Jim Costa (CA-20)
Member of Congress



Mike Levin (CA-49)
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano (CA-32)
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego (AZ-7)
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran (AZ-1)
Member of Congress



Scott Peters (CA-52)
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton (AZ-9)
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury (NM-1)
Member of Congress



Dina Titus (NV-1)
Member of Congress