

RESOLUTION
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
SUPPORTING FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO
FUND RESEARCH AND PLANNING ASSISTING IN
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Kansas City, Kansas
April 24, 2009

WHEREAS, climate variability and change have serious potential consequences for water resources planning and management, water rights administration, flood management, water supply availability, and water quality management; and

WHEREAS, expected impacts of climate change include increased aridification of much of the West, increased frequency and intensity of severe weather (droughts and floods), reduction of mountain snowpacks, changes in timing and amount of snowmelt runoff, increased plant and crop evapotranspiration resulting in increased water demands, and increased stress on water quality and temperature-sensitive aquatic ecosystems and fisheries; and

WHEREAS, climate change is an additional stressor on western water resources, which are already challenged by population growth, competition for scarce resources, increasingly stringent environmental regulations, and other factors; and

WHEREAS, water resources management and planning at all levels of government and sound future decision-making depend on our ability to understand, monitor, predict, and adapt to changing climate conditions; and

WHEREAS, the 2006 Western Governors' Association (WGA) report on *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future* and the follow-up 2008 WGA *Next Steps* report identify addressing climate change impacts as a priority for moving forward, and make specific recommendations for actions that the federal government and the states should take to support adaptation, including detailing research and planning needs; and

WHEREAS, the Council approved Position No. 285 in 2007, calling for the Administration and Congress to give a high priority for funding federal programs that provide for the application of basic research on climate variability and change to real-world water management; and

WHEREAS, the Council co-sponsored workshops in 2007 and 2008 to gather input on climate change adaptation and research needs; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) released its Circular 1331, *Climate Change and Water Resources Management: A Federal Perspective*, in February 2009,

identifying knowledge gaps, research needs, opportunities to improve planning capabilities, and other activities that would assist in climate change adaptation including those that could impact water quality and thus, available water supply; and

WHEREAS, applied research needs and improvements to water resources planning capabilities identified in the WGA and USGS reports and in the Council's workshops include subjects such as development of regional climate models and downscaled climate model datasets, evaluation of modifications to reservoir flood control rule curves, evaluation of adequacy of existing federal hydroclimate monitoring networks, development and improvement of applications for remote sensing data (satellite imagery), preparation of reconstructed paleoclimate datasets, and development of new guidelines for estimation of flood flow frequencies, consideration of water quality impacts; and

WHEREAS, many of the applied research needs and improvements to water resources planning capabilities identified in the WGA and USGS reports and in the Council's workshops are not presently incorporated into federal agency budgets;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western States Water Council supports development and enactment of federal legislation that would authorize and fund applied research and improvements to water resources management planning capabilities that would assist water agencies at all levels of government in adapting to climate change and variability.