



WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL

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Web Page: www.westgov.org/lwswc

Position #312

April 29, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman
Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Minority Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bingaman and Senator Murkowski:

I am writing on behalf of the Western States Water Council, an affiliate of the Western Governors' Association, to commend you on the introduction of S. 531, the Energy and Water Integration Act of 2009. As you know, the Council advises our governors on water policy issues, and we recognize the close symbiotic relationship between water and energy resources development and use. Not since the 1970's has the Nation faced such increasingly important resource management challenges and policy decisions related to our energy independence and sustainable water future, which now like then will only become more serious.

In the West we face an uncertain future due to increasing demands related to population growth, climate change and growing demands for water and energy to meet our economic needs while protecting our environment. Energy demands and their impact on our water and other natural resources, as well as our environment, are of particular concern. Our future prosperity as a Nation and a region will depend on wise investments in building, rebuilding and maintaining our capacity to provide adequate supplies of clean energy and clean fresh water for future generations.

We appreciate your leadership in addressing these challenges, and fully support the objective of S. 531, to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of energy development and production on our Nation's water resources. In general, we know far less than we would like regarding the sustainability of our increasingly scarce and threatened clean water supplies, current water uses and the future demands likely to be placed on those supplies. Similar uncertainty regarding our energy future compounds the problems policy makers and resource planners now face. States must be indispensable partners in addressing related issues.

Sound science is an important key to making wise investments in our future and decisions regarding water development and use. A knowledgeable lifecycle assessment of water and energy related needs for the transportation and electricity sectors is overdue. A comprehensive assessment and analysis of the water related impacts of different uses of fuels and power plant cooling technologies will help water and energy planners and policy makers better understand and cope with the challenges they face in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Water conservation has always been a fundamental principle of western water law and policy. Often the related energy savings is important. In the West, interbasin transfers of water within states are common, often involving a considerable expenditure of energy to move water significant distances. Energy and water use and related costs are a primary constraint when it comes to the West's economic well being, which has traditionally been based on agriculture,

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mining and other water intensive consumptive uses, as well as important water- based recreation and other non-consumptive instream uses. Water development, treatment, distribution and wastewater treatment consume substantial amounts of energy. Emerging and expanding technologies involving water recycling and reuse, and desalination, also are energy intensive. States must be appropriately involved in any authorized studies.

No region of the country feels the water-related impacts of energy development and use more acutely than the West, and nowhere is water conservation and wise use more important. As we have in the past, we look forward to working with you on this legislation and other strategies designed to address the future water needs of the West and the Nation.

Sincerely,



Garland Erbele, Chairman
Western States Water Council