

**Statement of Robert Quint, Senior Advisor  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
before the  
United States Senate  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
S. 2019  
February 27, 2014**

Chairman Schatz and members of the Subcommittee, I am Bob Quint, Senior Advisor at the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Department of the Interior (Department) on S. 2019. The bill would raise the authorization ceiling for water and energy conservation grants under the Secure Water Act of 2009 (42 USC 10364(e)), clarify that activities related to drought are authorized under the program, and revise the program's eligibility to include the State of Hawaii as discussed below. The Department supports this bill.

Reclamation owns and operates water projects that promote and sustain economic development within the 17 Western States. The mission of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public. Since it was established in 1902, Reclamation has constructed more than 600 dams and reservoirs including Hoover Dam on the Colorado River and Grand Coulee on the Columbia River. Reclamation is the largest wholesaler of water in the country, delivering water to more than 31 million people, and providing one out of five western farmers with irrigation water for 10 million acres of farmland across the United States. Reclamation is also the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, and provides significant amounts of renewable energy to customers throughout the West.

On February 10, 2010, Secretary Ken Salazar signed a Secretarial order establishing the Department's WaterSMART Initiative, which implements the Secure Water Act. The "SMART" in WaterSMART stands for "Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow." The WaterSMART Program includes WaterSMART Grants, Reclamation's Basin Studies, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, West-Wide Climate Risk Assessments, the Title XVI Water Reclamation and Recycling program, the Cooperative Watershed Management Program, the Water Conservation Field Service Program, USGS's Water Availability and Use Assessments, and the WaterSMART Clearinghouse. Through the WaterSMART Program, the Department works with states, tribes, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to secure and stretch water supplies for use by existing and future generations to benefit people, the economy, and the environment and will identify measures needed to address climate change and future demands.

WaterSMART activities are the most effective means the Department of the Interior has to assist state and local water providers and users address volatility of supplies, economic security, and

create resilience in the face of climate change. WaterSMART allows the Department to provide incentives and tools to achieve sustainable supplies, while supporting water managers who make their own decisions about what programs and activities will be the best and most practical fit in their particular watersheds.

WaterSMART Grants are directly aligned with the Department's Priority Goal for Water Conservation: to enable capability to increase the available water supply to 730,000 acre-feet of water savings per year by September 2013 and to a cumulative goal of 790,000 acre-feet by September 2014. Reclamation has met the September 2013 goal and is on track to meet the 2014 target: together, projects funded through WaterSMART and Reclamation's other water conservation activities from 2010 through 2013 are expected to result in over 734,000 acre-feet of water savings per year. This would not have been possible without the ingenuity and resourcefulness of our water and power customers who apply for and implement WaterSMART's water and energy efficiency grant projects at the district level. The projects funded by the WaterSMART program not only play a major role in helping minimize the effects of drought on the environment and agriculture and urban communities, but also contributes to drought resiliency.

WaterSMART also acknowledges the nexus between energy and water use. In addition to saving water, WaterSMART Grant projects from 2010-2013 are expected by their sponsors to save over 45 million kilowatt-hours annually – enough power for 3,900 households – and additional savings are expected in the future. Additional milestones are described in the program's three-year progress report, online at <http://www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART>.

Reclamation is committed to continuing WaterSMART, and it is anticipated that the program will exhaust its authorized appropriations for WaterSMART Grants. Therefore, in order to continue use of this highly valuable and continually oversubscribed program, which is significantly contributing to drought resiliency in the West, an increase in the authorization ceiling will be needed. S. 2019 would amend Section 9504(e) of the Secure Water Act, raising the ceiling from \$200 million to an authorization to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2023 . A ceiling raise is consistent with part of the Appropriations language section of Reclamation's FY 2014 budget request. A ceiling raise to \$250 million, as was included in the budget request, would ensure that these important water management improvements could continue temporarily but would not likely allow for funding beyond 2016. For that reason, Reclamation supports the language in S. 2019 to authorize funding for the program through 2023.

Section 2 of S. 2019 would make clear that Section 9504(a) authorizes Reclamation to provide financial assistance to plan for or address the impacts of drought. Reclamation shares the sponsor's view that activities related to drought are appropriately addressed under this section and appreciates the clarification of this authority.

Section 2 of S. 2019 would also revise the eligibility language in the Secure Water Act to allow entities located in Hawaii to be eligible for WaterSMART grant funding opportunities. WaterSMART Grants funding opportunity announcements have been limited to the States and U.S. Territories identified under 43 U.S.C. § 391. With a number of exceptions, Reclamation's

primary mission has generally been constrained to the 17 continental Western States, which all share an arid climate and a well-established history of prior appropriations water rights doctrines. One such exception is the State of Hawaii, which shares many of the same features as the U.S. Territories, and also already participates in several Reclamation programs such as the Title XVI program, limited application of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Program, and water resource studies authorized under P.L. 106-566 and P.L. 102-575. However, Reclamation notes that we do not support adding additional states to the WaterSMART program at this time, as the piece-meal incorporation of additional states would be a significant expansion of Reclamation's mission when the agency is already struggling to fulfill its commitments within its traditional and currently authorized area of operations. For these reasons, the Department believes that this expansion of authority should be limited to the State of Hawaii.

Finally, Section 3 of S. 2019 would extend the authority of the Secretary to provide grants to State water resource agencies. This authority ran out in 2013 and the Department supports the language in Section 3 that extends the grant program in Section 9508(c) for another decade for such sums as may be necessary to remain available until expended. The valuable partnership with State water resource agencies is a critical national asset for determining water availability nationwide.

In conclusion, the Department is committed to continuing the WaterSMART Program, as the Federal government has a responsibility to provide leadership and tools to address the increasing and widespread challenges of imbalance between supply and demand. Sustainable water supplies are the underpinning of a stable economic base, employment continuity, and smart growth. We can provide incentives to encourage water conservation and reuse, leadership in new technology to increase usable supplies, and assistance for ecosystem restoration efforts that increase the certainty of water supplies for the future. All of these efforts depend on partnerships with local utilities, states, tribes, and others.

This concludes my statement. Again, the Department supports S. 2019. I would be pleased to answer questions at the appropriate time.