

WESTERN STATES WATER

Issue No. 1720

May 7, 2007

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL

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WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL

Spring Meetings - Sioux Falls, South Dakota

On May 2-4, the spring meetings of the Western States Water Council were held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The Council adopted two new policy position statements/resolutions. The first supports funding for federal programs to study the water resources-related impacts of climate variability and change and our ability to adapt, stating that to date federal agencies and research "...have concentrated heavily on basic scientific research, research that needs to be translated into decision support applications for water resources management..." It specifically endorses work under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) **Regional** and urges the Administration and Congress to "give a high priority to funding for federal programs, such as the RISAs that provide the translation function between basic scientific research on climate variability and change and the application of that research to real-world water management situations at the regional, state and local levels."

The second position statement expresses support for legislation to specifically authorize activities under **Interior's Water 2025 Initiative** and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Challenge Grants Program as an appropriate "proactive, but non-regulatory, approach to encouraging water conservation – with further state and local input – through voluntary federal-state-local partnerships..." It also calls on Reclamation to provide meaningful opportunities for non-federal participation in the development of eligibility criteria and priorities..." It also states that Water 2025 should complement Reclamation's Water Conservation Field Services Program and in no way nullifies the need for that program." Reclamation believes it already has the authority necessary for its past and present activities, but so as to address concerns raised by some in the Congress, Senator Domenici introduced S. 2561 last year to authorize the Secretary of Interior to make cost-shared grants and enter into cooperative agreements to further the goals of the Water 2025 program. A bill has yet to be introduced in this Congress.

The Council also recommended two additional positions for the governors' review, as well as suggested changes to update a Western Governors' Association (WGA) policy resolution.