



May 5, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman:

On behalf of the Family Farm Alliance, I write today in support of provisions in your Committee's legislative proposal related to section 2001 of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025 (H. Con. Res.14), which are important to Western irrigated agriculture. Specifically, we believe inclusion of funding for water storage and conveyance projects and the new program that would provide opportunities to pay for expedited environmental reviews are crucial provisions that will ensure our farms and communities are more drought resilient. We also greatly appreciate the Committee's past and continued recognition of the value and importance of Western water infrastructure.

The Alliance is a grassroots organization of family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in 16 Western states. We are committed to the fundamental proposition that Western irrigated agriculture must be preserved and protected for a host of economic, sociological, environmental and national security reasons – many of which are often overlooked in the context of other national policy decisions. The American food consumer nationwide has access to domestically produced fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains and beef throughout the year largely because of Western irrigated agriculture and the projects that provide water to these farmers and ranchers.

New and improved water storage and conveyance is needed in nearly every region in the West to ensure reliable water deliveries can be made to farms and communities. Funding these key water projects will ensure that water managers have the ability to capture and move water when it is available to prepare for the dry years we know will come. We have shown time and time again that these are good investments that unleash agricultural and economic prosperity while preventing devastating and expensive drought impacts.

At the same time, we face the reality that many well intentioned environmental laws - including the National Environmental Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and others – are being implemented in a way that is not working in the West. We have watched for decades as needed water projects, forest restoration efforts, and many other water management activities have been stymied by a few extreme, litigious environmental groups. Meanwhile, the Alliance and its members have a proven track record of working with constructive conservation groups to advance on-the-ground projects and national policies that promote agriculture and protect the environment. Enacting a predictable path through the environmental compliance gauntlet would be a major benefit to water users, especially Western irrigated agriculture, and accelerate the development of critical infrastructure and restoration efforts.

This type of direction is long overdue.

Thank you again for your work on this bill and for the Committee's support of Western irrigated agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Keppen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Keppen, P.E.
Executive Director