



ISSUE ALERT!

Senate ENR Water and Power Subcommittee to Hear Testimony on Western Water Bills



**Subcommittee Chairman
Senator Ron Wyden (D-OREGON)**



**Subcommittee Ranking Member
Senator Jim Risch (R-IDAHO)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 18, 2023) – The Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Water and Power Subcommittee tomorrow will hear testimony on sixteen bills dealing with the impacts of drought across the West, including restoration of fish habitat and permitting new hydropower projects.

The Family Farm Alliance prior to the hearing submitted [written testimony](#) that addresses most of the bills that will be heard.

“We have actively advocated for and contributed to the development of several of the West-wide bills on the hearing docket,” said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. “Some of the bills contain provisions that work well for both producers and the NGO community. Others, in our view, appear to put the needs of fish, wildlife and ecosystems above the interests of our farmer-rancher membership.”

The hearing will be held on Wednesday, July 19, 2023, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

Legislation addressed in the Alliance testimony includes:

- [S. 482](#), the "Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement Support Act" from Subcommittee Chair Ron Wyden (D-OR) that would address issues related to impacts of the removal of non-federal hydro dams on the Klamath River, among other things left over from the failed Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA).

- [S. 1521](#), the "Community and Hydropower Improvement Act" from Senators Steve Daines (R-MT) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) which would improve the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing and relicensing processes across existing generation, nonpowered dams and pumped storage projects.

- [S. 2247](#), from Senators John Hickenlooper (D-CO) and Mitt Romney (R-UT) which would extend endangered fish recovery programs in the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins.

- [S. 1118](#), the "Open Access Evapotranspiration Data Act (OpenET)," from Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), which would provide for federal

funds from the USGS to calculate water used by crops and vegetation across the landscape.

- [S. 2102](#), the "Water for Conservation and Farming Act," from Sen. Wyden, would establish a \$300 million fund at the Bureau of Reclamation for water recycling, efficiency, and dam safety projects, among other programs.

- [S. 2160](#), from Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID), which would help accelerate repairs to high-risk canals running through urbanized areas of the West through additional financial assistance from the Aging Infrastructure Account funded by the bipartisan infrastructure law.

- [S. 2161](#), the "Canal Conveyance Capacity Restoration Act," from Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), that would authorize \$653 million to restore three San Joaquin Valley canals impacted by subsidence and old age, and \$180 million for the restoration program on the San Joaquin River.

- [S. 2162](#), the "Support to Rehydrate the Environment, Agriculture and Municipalities (STREAM) Act," from Sen. Feinstein, which would increase water supply and modernize water infrastructure across the West.

- [S. 2166](#), the "Voluntary Agricultural Land Repurposing Act," from Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA), which would provide grants to state and Native American tribes for programs to repurpose agricultural lands for at least 10 years in a bid to reduce groundwater use.

- [S. 2169](#), the "Watershed Results Act," from Sen. Wyden, would authorize the Interior Department to spend up to \$15 million annually for as many as five watershed pilot projects designed to provide measurable results from prioritized conservation activities across a watershed using advance watershed analytics and streamlined federal grants.

- [S. 2202](#), the "Restore Aging Infrastructure Now Act," from Sen. Feinstein, would draw from \$3.2 billion appropriated to the Bureau of Reclamation in the bipartisan infrastructure law to help pay for upgrades to aging Reclamation-owned canals that provide for additional public benefits, including drinking water for disadvantaged communities.

The sole witness at tomorrow's hearing is Camille C. Touton, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. The hearing will be webcast live on the [committee's website](#), and an archived video will be available shortly after the hearing concludes.

"The Alliance looks forward to working with this Committee to address the issues we have identified in this testimony and some that we have not," said Mr. Keppen.

We will continue to keep you informed on this and other developments impacting Western irrigated agriculture.

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