



Industry Groups Urge New Administration to Address Water Infrastructure

By Brian German

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A large group of agricultural organizations and water districts are calling for more federal support to address water infrastructure. More than 200 organizations sent letters to President-elect Joe Biden and congressional leadership, highlighting water issues in the West. The coalition points out the significant need for federal support in any future infrastructure or economic recovery package. Much of the Western water infrastructure is more than 50 years old and is in dire need of upgrades.

“While many think of infrastructure in terms of highways, bridges and other transportation facilities, there is an equally compelling need for federal investment in water infrastructure across the West,” Western Growers President and CEO Dave Puglia [said in a press release](#). “Meaningful and timely federal investment in water infrastructure, along with a regulatory system that prioritizes efficiency and completion of projects, is necessary to preserve our farms and strengthen our rural communities in the West.”

The coalition notes several priority areas that would benefit from federal support. Water conservation, watershed management, and habitat restoration are listed as recommended actions. The group also explains the need for new water storage facilities and federal financing options to make them possible. Addressing the regulatory constraints for water projects will also be needed to ensure timely construction. The coalition is also advocating for more water recycling and desalination investment along with funding support for local districts overseeing federal irrigation projects.

President-elect Biden and Congress are being urged to consider the consequences of failing to act on water infrastructure needs. Investing in upgrades for Western water need is vital for keeping agricultural production viable and ensuring the safety of water supplies for communities. Signatories of the letters include Western Growers, American Farm Bureau Federation, California Citrus Mutual, Groundwater Management Districts Association, and California Fresh Fruit Association. Altogether, the coalition represents nearly one-third of all agricultural production in the U.S. and tens of millions of water users.



Brian German

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Multimedia Journalist for AgNet West

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