



December 9, 2008

Senator Barbara Boxer, Chair
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
SD - 456
Washington, D.C. 20010

Dear Chairman Boxer:

On behalf of the Water Resources Coalition, we are writing to encourage that you request of the Senate leadership Senate consideration of S. 2728, the Twenty-First Century Water Commission Act of 2008 when the Senate returns in mid-November for the wrap-up of the 110th Congress. We believe that it is timely and important to examine the nation's future water needs and develop recommendations for a comprehensive water strategy.

The Water Resources Coalition is a coalition of organizations representing state and local government, engineering and construction, ports, waterways, transportation services and conservation organizations that have an interest in comprehensive national water resources policy. Our primary focus is on the need to invest more money and resources in our nation's water resources which is why we have also been supportive of the Stimulus packages that have been under consideration in Congress.

It is critical that the nation prepare itself for continued population growth and the concomitant pressures on supplies that increased demands bring. In addition, weather variations such as extended droughts and climate change are bringing new challenges to planners and policymakers. We think it will be extremely useful for the Commission to analyze existing water assessments to examine how various federal agencies are dealing future water needs. We also applaud the legislation for requiring the Commission to develop a comprehensive water strategy directed at increasing water supplies and improving the availability, reliability and quality of freshwater. **It has been thirty five years since these issues were last reviewed by a National Water Commission.**

improve, prevent, save
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It is clear to us that federal investments in these goals will be key to improving our nation's economic prosperity and environment. While we are not yet in a crisis, we face chronic problems that will only get worse without planning and aggressive actions as showcased in the recent PBS documentary: "The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry". Not only must we preserve and protect our existing water infrastructure, we need to increase spending for replacement and new construction to address expansion of our population.

It is our shared responsibility to future generations to plan for and provide an adequate and dependable supply of clean and safe water. With its broad cross-section of regional and geographical perspectives, the Commission will be uniquely qualified to suggest options and strategies for our long-term water needs.

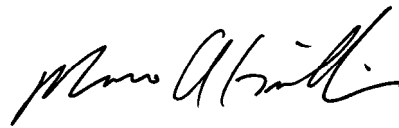
S. 2728 and its companion legislation in the House of Representatives, H.R. 135, have been vetted for six years by Congress and have bipartisan support. With each bill now out of Committee and pending respective floor consideration by each Chamber, the time to act and take a bold and major first step in heading off a water crisis is now. **We ask that you use this unique window of opportunity to request that S. 2728 be considered on the Senate floor.**

We thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to the passage of this important legislation. In addition to our own Coalition members we have included a partial list of other organizations that support the value of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Brian Pallasch
Co-Chairman
American Society of Civil Engineers



Marco Giamberardino
Co-Chairman
Associated General Contractors of America

cc. Senator James Inhofe
Ranking Minority Member

Senator Johnny Isakson

PARTIAL LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE BENEFITS OF A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WATER COMMISSION STUDY

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
TEXAS WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD
NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION
MAYOR SHIRLEY FRANKLIN, CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA
IRRIGATION ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES
AMERICAN RIVERS