

BUDGET ISSUES: USBR - Establishing a Strong Role in Texas

Created in 1902, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) is an agency within the Department of the Interior whose mission is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner within the western states. The addition of Texas in 1906 expanded USBR responsibility to 17 western states.

Limited funding despite great need. Texas typically receives less than 1% of USBR's budget, lower than other western states. Even as USBR's budget has increased in recent years, the Texas funding allocation has not increased substantially.

USBR's budget includes significant funding for water storage and water resources-related work, including under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. The [Texas State Water Plan](#) identifies numerous Texas water storage and delivery projects that could benefit from this category of USBR funding. Texas has among the fastest population growth of any state, and as such, the greatest need to meet increasing water demands through new water supply projects.

Legacy grant programs limit Texas' funding opportunities. The Title XVI Grant Program funds legacy projects, limiting Texas' ability to compete or benefit from the program. Participation in Texas is mostly limited to the City of El Paso,

which has received \$14.3 million, including \$12 million awarded under USBR special congressional authorization; and the remaining \$2 million awarded for a desalination project under the WIIN Act. To date, the rest of Texas has been awarded a total of \$1.9 million for 12 studies.

Competitive grant programs could better target USBR funds. Competitive grant programs promote efficient use of federal funds by requiring all projects to compete on a level playing field and be prioritized for federal funding based on project cost and benefits. TWCA strongly supports the competitive Title XVI water reuse/recycling program put in place by the WIIN Act. Similarly, USBR's WaterSMART competitive planning program has offered extensive benefits to Texas water managers; 35 projects in Texas have received over \$12.1 million in WaterSMART grants over a period of several years. Competitive programs allow USBR to target federal dollars to projects providing the greatest benefit.

REQUESTS:

Increase USBR funding for Texas. Increased funding for Texas would promote funding equity with other western states and assist in the implementation of water supply, conveyance, and reuse projects. TWCA supports additional funding as proposed in S. 1932, provided Texas receives an equitable share of overall funding.

Replace the legacy Title XVI program with a competitive program, such as the competitive Title XVI program initiated under the WIIN Act.



SANFORD DAM AT LAKE MEREDITH