

President Biden’s Investing in America Agenda Provides \$50 Million for Water and Energy Efficiency Projects

Bureau of Reclamation, 11/14/23

WASHINGTON — The Department of the Interior today announced the availability of up to \$50 million for water conservation and efficiency projects as part of the President’s Investing in America agenda to enhance the resilience of the West to drought and climate change.

Funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will boost the Bureau of Reclamation’s Water and Energy Efficiency Grants Program, which provides funding for projects that result in quantifiable water savings, implement renewable energy components, and support broader resilience and sustainability benefits. These projects conserve and use water more efficiently; increase the production of renewable energy; mitigate conflict risk in areas at a high risk of future water conflict; and accomplish other benefits that contribute to sustainability.

The announcement today was made following the release of the Fifth National Climate Assessment, an annual report assessing the science of climate change, its impacts, and our options for reducing present and future risk. This is part of an overall \$100 million the Bureau of Reclamation is announcing this week for water infrastructure upgrades that advance drought resilience in the West.

“In the wake of severe drought conditions throughout the West, the Department is bringing every tool and resource to bear — including significant investments through President Biden’s Investing America agenda — to help build community resilience to drought and climate change for generations to come,” said Secretary Deb Haaland. “Through today’s funding announcement, we are working to advance innovative solutions for water conservation and climate resilience.”

“In order to make our communities more drought resilient, we must take actions wherever possible to deliver water more efficiently,” said Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton. “Under the Biden-Harris administration’s Investing in America agenda, we have a unique opportunity to fund these projects to help our water users adapt to meet future needs.”

Drought conditions across the West impact a wide range of communities and sectors, including agriculture, cities, Tribes, the environment, recreation, hydropower producers, and others. Through the WaterSMART program, Reclamation provides financial assistance for projects that seek to conserve and use water more efficiently and accomplish other benefits that contribute to sustainability in the West.

President Biden's Investing in America agenda represents the largest investment in climate resilience in the nation's history and is providing much-needed resources to enhance Western communities' resilience to drought and climate change. Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Reclamation is investing a total of \$8.3 billion over five fiscal years for water infrastructure projects to repair aging water delivery systems, secure dams, complete rural water projects, protect aquatic ecosystems and fulfill Indian Water Rights Settlements.

This is a two-year funding opportunity. The first application period ends in February 2024. For further information on this grant visit [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov). This water and energy efficiency funding builds upon previously announced funding as part of the \$140 million designated for Water and Energy Efficiency grants in 2023.

Pre-empting enviro blitz, Newsom OKs streamlining approvals for Calif.'s first new dam in 50 years

The Sun, 11/7/23

The first reservoir in California in nearly 50 years is now on the fastrack for completion.

Monday, Gov. Gavin Newsom utilized the state's new infrastructure streamlining bill to have Sites Reservoir avoid years of delays from environmental legal challenges.

The backstory: The new law that Newsom used is Senate Bill 149, which he signed into law in July.

- SB 149 sets a limit of 270 days for courts to deal with legal challenges under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- When he signed it, Newsom said it was to take advantage of \$180 billion in state, local and federal infrastructure funds over the next decade.

Driving the news: Sites Reservoir is expected to cost \$4.5 billion and will be located in northern California, about 70 miles north of Sacramento.

- This is the first project that Newsom is qualifying under SB 149.
- Sites Reservoir will capture water from the Sacramento River and have a capacity of 1.5 million acre-feet. It's an off-stream reservoir, meaning it would have water directed to it from the Sacramento River instead of damming it.

What they're saying: "We're cutting red tape to build more faster," Newsom said in a statement. "These are projects that will address our state's biggest challenges faster, and the Sites Reservoir is fully representative of that goal – making sure Californians have access to clean drinking water and making sure we're more resilient against future droughts."

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