

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0301

March 15, 2016

Chairman Mike Simpson
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
United States House of Representatives
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Marcy Kaptur
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
United States House of Representatives
1016 LHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As you begin work on the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Energy and Water Development bill, we urge you to meet the President's budget request of \$240,000 for the Colorado River Water Quality Improvement Program. These resources will enable the Bureau of Reclamation to continue to monitor and investigate water quality measures and develop comprehensive and cost-effective mitigation plans for chemical and biological contaminants. This request will also allow for the continuation of important efforts to contain and eradicate Zebra and Quagga Mussel populations in the Lower Colorado River.

The Colorado River is the main water source for millions of residents and visitors across the southwestern United States. The iconic infrastructure along the river, such as the Hoover dam and the Central Arizona Project canals, are marvels of engineering that supply drinking water to hundreds of communities as well as irrigate millions of acres of precious farmland. Contaminants in the river system cause an estimated \$750 million per year in damages to household, commercial and agricultural users.

Invasive quagga mussels present one of the most difficult mitigation challenges river managers face. The Bureau of Reclamation called attention to this serious problem in this year's budget request stating, "Quagga mussel is a rapidly reproducing invasive species that has infested the Colorado River System and is greatly impacting the system's operations and management. The mussels block water intake structures, impacting pumping capabilities for power and water operation, affecting the water supply. This blockage results in damage to the structures, requiring additional repairs or replacement of equipment."

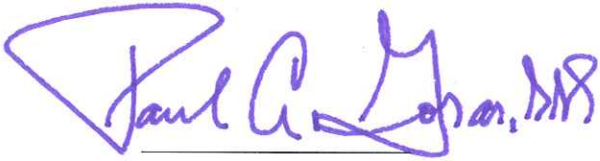
The Bureau of Reclamation spends over \$1 million annually at Hoover Dam alone on mussel control. These filter feeder organisms spread extensively and can quickly cover underwater surfaces, damaging critical infrastructure such as pipes, filters and hydropower mechanics. The mussels also threaten ecological systems and native species by impacting the intricate food web in the river and reservoirs.

As the primary steward of the massive Colorado River water system, the Bureau of Reclamation has a responsibility to collect and maintain timely, accurate, and relevant data pertaining to water quality and invasive species. This information is integral to developing effective management plans to prevent the spread of invasive species and control the presence of salt, chemical and biological contaminants.

Due to the outsized importance of the Colorado River to the millions of Americans in the Southwest, we strongly support the Colorado River Water Quality Improvement Program. We recognize the challenges of the current fiscal environment and appreciate your dutiful consideration of diverse FY 2017 appropriations priorities.

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership on the committee.

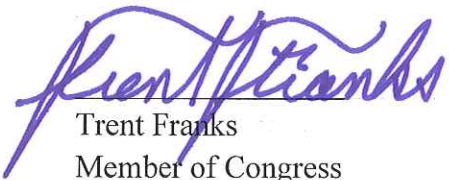
Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



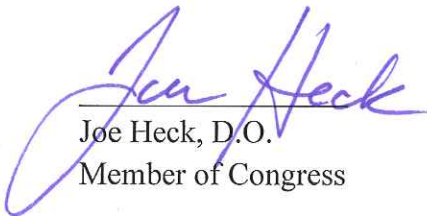
Paul Cook
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress



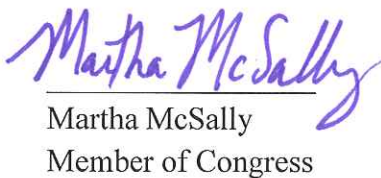
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



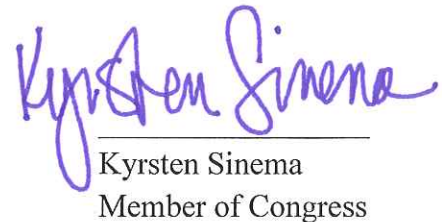
Joe Heck, D.O.
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Martha McSally
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress