



Western States Water

Addressing Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future

682 East Vine Street / Suite 7 / Murray, UT 84107 / (801) 685-2555 / Fax 685-2559 / www.westernstateswater.org

Chair - Jon Niermann; Executive Director - Tony Willardson; Editor - Michelle Bushman; Subscriptions - Julie Groat

WESTERN GOVERNORS

Elections

In the four gubernatorial races in the West, incumbents Spencer Cox (R-UT) and Greg Gianforte (R-MT) were reelected. Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Doug Burgum (R-ND) did not seek reelection. Their seats were won by Bob Ferguson (D-WA) and Kelly Armstrong (R-ND) respectively. Ferguson previously served as Washington's 18th Attorney General. Armstrong previously served as a U.S. Representative for North Dakota's at-large district, and as Vice Chair of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. WSWC member states include 11 Republican and 7 Democrat governors.

ADMINISTRATION

Elections

On November 5, the United States general elections resulted in a victory for President-elect Donald Trump and Vice President-elect J.D. Vance, winning both the popular vote and at least 295 electoral college votes. Arizona and Nevada election outcomes are still pending.

CONGRESS

Elections/House of Representatives

In races for the House of Representatives, there are 20 new members elected across Western States, with an additional 22 races in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington still undecided. New representatives include Abraham Hamadeh (R-AZ-8), Gil Cisneros (D-CA-31), Jeff Hurd (R-CO-3), Lauren Boebert (R-CO-4), Jeff Crank (R-CO-5), Derek Schmidt (R-KS-2), Troy Downing (R-MT-2), Maxine Dexter (D-OR 3), Craig Goldman (R-TX 12), Sylvester Turner (D-TX-18), Brandon Gill (R-TX-26), Julie Johnson (D-TX-32), Mike Kennedy (R-UT-3), Michael Baumgartner (R-WA-5), and Emily Randall (D-WA-6). Whether Republicans will retain control of the House remains undecided, with their current count at 210 seats compared to the Democrats' 198 seats, of the 218 needed to control the House.

On November 7, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA) sent letters

to House Republican lawmakers asking for support to remain in those positions assuming Republicans control the House. Glenn (GT) Thompson (R-PA), Chair of the Agriculture Committee was reelected, as was Ranking Member David Scott (D-GA). Incumbent Tom Cole (R-OK), Chairman of the Appropriations Committee was reelected, so too was Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). Cathy McMorris Rogers (R-WA), current Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee did not run for reelection. Her replacement as Chair is uncertain at this time. Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ) was reelected. Natural Resources Committee Chair Bruce Westerman (R-AR) and Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) both won reelection. Science Space and Technology Committee Chair Frank Lucas (R-OK) and Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) both won reelection. Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA) both won reelection.

Elections/Senate

Republicans have taken a majority in the Senate with 53 seats to the Democrats' 45 seats, with 2 seats still undecided. Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ) is leaving the Senate. Her seat remains undecided. Jacky Rosen (D-NV) is fighting to retain her seat. Incumbent western senators who won reelection include: Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE), Pete Ricketts (R-NE), Martine Heinrich (D-NM), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Ted Cruz (R-TX), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), and John Barrasso (R-WY). In California, Adam Schiff (D-CA) won the late Dianne Feinstein's former Senate seat, which had been filled in the interim by Senator Laphonza Butler. Butler announced shortly after taking the seat that she would not run for the office. In Montana, Tim Sheehy (R-MT) defeated incumbent John Tester (D-MT), flipping the seat for the Republicans. Former U.S. Representative John Curtis (R-UT) won the seat of retiring Mitt Romney (R-UT).

Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) is retiring, leaving as Chair of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. John Boozman (R-AR) is presently the Vice Chair. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) won Stabenow's seat.

Neither Appropriations Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA), nor Vice Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) were up for reelection. Both Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Ted Cruz (R-TX), Chair and Vice Chair of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee were reelected. Joe Manchin (I-WV) is also retired, leaving as Chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. John Barasso (R-WY) is the Vice Chair. Jim Justice (R-WV) won Manchin's seat. Environment and Public Works Chair Thomas Carper (D-DE) is retiring. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) is the Vice Chair. Carper's seat has been won by Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE). Neither Indian Affairs Committee Chair Brian Schatz (D-HI), nor Vice Chair Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) were up for reelection.

WATER RESOURCES

Arizona/Groundwater

On October 21, the Arizona Department of Real Estate (ADRE) issued cease-and-desist orders to a developer attempting to create subdivisions in Scottsdale while skirting water supply laws in the Phoenix AMA. ADRE alleged that the developer failed to obtain a subdivision public report which, among other AMA statutory requirements, requires a certificate of assured water supply from ADWR. Governor Hobbs said: "Today I am glad to report [ADRE] has taken swift action to prevent what it believes is a blatant evasion of consumer protection and water security laws. Rio Verde Foothills has suffered enough as a result of bad apple developers skirting the law and building without first securing a water supply. While we can take action in this case, our laws still fall short of offering true solutions that protect consumers. We must take legislative action to crack down on the loopholes being exploited by developers to profit at the expense of everyday Arizonans."

On October 23, the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) initiated action to consider designating the Willcox Groundwater Basin as a new active management area (AMA). The agency will hold a public hearing on November 22 to present data and hear comments. In the meantime, the basin is closed to new agricultural use.

Governor Katie Hobbs issued a statement of support saying: "When I traveled to Willcox, I heard stories from farmers, local well owners, and a bipartisan group of elected officials who are concerned about their community's future because of groundwater depletion. I saw dried up wells, fissures in the earth, and farms struggling to survive because of unchecked pumping of the precious water that Arizonans rely on. As [ADWR] begins this important process, I look forward to hearing more from Arizonans concerned about securing our water future."

DOI/Aquifer Recharge

On October 22, the Department of Interior announced an investment of \$9M for groundwater recharge, storage and recovery and a water rights transition program in Kansas. The Kansas Equus Beds Aquifer Recharge, Storage and Recovery Project near Wichita will receive \$7M. When fully implemented, the Equus project will recharge up to 100 million gallons per day through injection and infiltration from Little Arkansas River diversions in south-central Kansas. The Kansas Voluntary Agreements Program will receive \$2M for the state-implemented Kansas Water Transition Assistance Program in either the Prairie Dog Creek or Rattlesnake Creek Basins. The program will conserve approximately 10,000 acre-feet through rotating temporary land fallowing or permanently retiring water rights.

WATER RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

EPA/Infrastructure

On October 24, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced \$128M in funding to support the Truckee Meadows in building the OneWater Nevada Advanced Purified Water Facility at American Flat. The funding includes \$55M through the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), \$70M through the State's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), and \$3M through Congressionally directed spending sponsored by Senator Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV). The facility will take highly treated effluent water from the Reno-Stead Water Reclamation Facility and put it through a multi-step purification process. The water will then be injected into a groundwater aquifer at American Flat.

On the same day, the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality announced six SRF loan awards for water and sanitary sewer projects. The CWSRF awarded \$350,000 to the City of Drayton, \$15M to Fargo, and \$3.3M to Jamestown to replace aging water meters to ensure accurate accounting of water use and identify potential leaks. Grand Forks received a \$6.9M CWSRF loan for Phases 2 through 5 of a sanitary sewer collection installation. The Southeast Water Users District received a \$5.7M DWSRF loan towards the construction of a new water treatment plant, a new ground storage reservoir, and the expansion of the existing wellfield. Mandan received a \$5.5M DWSRF loan toward replacing the Collins Reservoir.

On October 23, EPA announced \$32M for water infrastructure in Arizona including allotments for the IJJA Clean Water General Supplemental funds for Arizona (\$16.8M), Clean Water Emerging Contaminants funds (\$1.5M), and the Drinking Water Emerging Contaminants Fund (\$13.4M).

The WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL is a government entity of representatives appointed by the Governors of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.