



P.O. Box 216 Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

*Protecting Water for Western Irrigated Agriculture*

September 15, 2020

Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Chairman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1511 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Honorable Rob Bishop  
Ranking Member  
House Natural Resources Committee  
123 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop:

On behalf of the Family Farm Alliance (Alliance), I am writing in support of the *WIFIA Improvement Act* (H.R. 8217), to amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (WIFIA) to provide a new 55-year loan term for WIFIA financing and to clarify that WIFIA financing may be used for works that were constructed by the federal government, through agencies such as the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), but have been contractually transferred to be operated and maintained by a local non-federal agency (transferred works).

The Alliance is a grassroots organization of family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts and allied industries in 16 Western states. The Alliance is focused on one mission: To ensure the availability of reliable, affordable irrigation water supplies to Western farmers and ranchers. We are also committed to the fundamental proposition that Western irrigated agriculture must be preserved and protected for a host of economic, sociological, environmental and national security reasons – many of which are often overlooked in the context of other national policy decisions.

As you know, federally backed financing programs, like WIFIA, can generate annual debt service savings of 20 percent or more for most water agencies. The legislation's establishment of an additional, longer-term loan that can be repaid over 55-years rather than the current maximum period of 35-years will increase these savings even further for projects that have an operational life of 55 years or more. The bill also clarifies that WIFIA loans can be used for the repair, replacement, and rehabilitation of transferred works that were originally constructed by

Reclamation but are continually operated, maintained, and replaced by a local non-federal agency under a legally binding contract. Without this clarification, transferred works would not be eligible for WIFIA loans, making the financial burden on the local non-federal agency for larger replacement and rehabilitation projects much more expensive, further delaying these important upgrades.

This legislation will expand the financing of the WIFIA Program to accelerate work on critically needed infrastructure projects throughout the West and allow for more local agencies to access the benefits of low-cost, long-term federal financing.

We strongly urge the Committee to hold a hearing on this legislation to receive testimony and additional information on the many benefits of this bill.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Keppen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Keppen  
Executive Director