



P.O. Box 216 Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

Protecting Water for Western Irrigated Agriculture

September 16, 2020

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C 20510

Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

On behalf of the Family Farm Alliance (Alliance), I am writing to urge the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to hold a hearing and advance the *Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act* (S. 4530), to establish an airborne snow observatory (ASO) and measurement program within the Department of the Interior. The legislation would create a federal unified program for mountain snowpack readings and ensure that the most proven snowpack measurement methods, like ASO, continue to receive federal investment. The establishment of this program will help water managers and users with water conservation, supply, and delivery forecasts across the West.

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.

The legislation provides \$15 million to the ASO measurement program for fiscal years 2022 to 2026, ensuring that water managers will continue to have the best tools and technologies available in order to be strategic in water management practices and help to navigate changing weather patterns and seasonal water forecasting. The bill also focuses on innovative methods of measuring snowpack which will provide more accurate estimates and allow water managers to maximize the beneficial use of water supplies and better prepare for the season ahead.

The Alliance recognizes that accurate readings on our snowpack provide us with an invaluable tool to better use and conserve our Western water supplies – the most critical resource for our rural Western communities and the environment. 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 'D. Keppen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Keppen
Executive Director