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## **Water Infrastructure in the Spotlight**

### ***Coloradan Chris Treese to represent Alliance and NWRA at Senate oversight hearing***

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – The pressing need to prioritize Western water infrastructure repairs and modernization will be the focus of Colorado River Water Conservation District (River District) external affairs manager Chris Treese, who testifies at a committee oversight hearing scheduled tomorrow morning in the U.S. Senate.

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is conducting the hearing to receive testimony on opportunities to improve and expand infrastructure important to federal lands, recreation, water and resources. Mr. Treese – who is representing the Family Farm Alliance and the National Water Resources Association in addition to the River District – will emphasize in his [testimony](#) that water infrastructure for both agricultural and municipal water providers must be recognized as nationally important and qualified as such in potential infrastructure legislation. Mr. Treese’s [written testimony](#) emphasizes that qualifying projects should include water conveyance, surface water storage, aquifer storage and recovery, wastewater, water reuse, desalination, and efficiency investments.

“We also believe that infrastructure legislation must apply to the remediation of aging infrastructure as well as to the development of new infrastructure,” said Mr. Treese. “Moreover, meaningful infrastructure legislation should encourage integrated water planning, from watershed to wastewater discharge. Investments in forest health and watershed management can have as high or greater returns as traditional brick-and-mortar capital investments.”

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Water infrastructure is perhaps the most important, yet overlooked, form of infrastructure in our nation.

“Water is the lifeblood of our nation,” said Mr. Treese. “Without reliable water, every sector of our economy would suffer – from agriculture, to manufacturing, to high-tech. Food cannot be grown, businesses cannot operate, and homes and schools cannot be built or operate without water.”

Many communities of the semi-arid and arid West – as well as the farms and ranches they are intertwined with– owe their existence, in large part, to the certainty provided by water stored and delivered by the Bureau of Reclamation and other state and local water storage projects. The NWRA and the Alliance are organizations that represent the water users that are the cornerstone of western communities and their economies.

“Critical water infrastructure must be maintained and modernized to ensure the delivery and safety of water today and for future generations,” said Ian Lyle, executive vice-president for NWRA. “As Congress discusses the development of an infrastructure package, it is of paramount importance that maintenance and rehabilitation of water infrastructure is a high priority.”

Irrigated farming and ranching is a huge economic driver in the West, particularly in rural communities.

“This economic force would virtually disappear, along with the rural American communities dependent on farming and ranching, if the water infrastructure that supports it crumbles,” said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. “Given the magnitude of the food security issue to the nation’s economic and social wellbeing, policy makers must prioritize protection of our water infrastructure.”

Tomorrow’s hearing, and the chance to discuss water infrastructure, is especially timely as it coincides with Water Week 2017, a week when water and wastewater organizations from around the nation travel to D.C. to highlight the national importance of water.

“We have a great opportunity tomorrow to emphasize the importance of water infrastructure to our nation, its economy, and its health,” said Mr. Treese. “A strong commitment to water infrastructure must be made in any infrastructure package that Congress and the Administration considers.”

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