

## For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Stephen Koenigsberg, 303-915-7301, [skpublicrelations@gmail.com](mailto:skpublicrelations@gmail.com)

### **Protect the Flows Applauds President Obama For Commitment to Solving Western Water Challenges in FY17 Budget**

*February 9, 2016, Denver, Colorado* -- Today the Obama Administration announced its FY17 budget that includes a significant focus on drought response and investments in water conservation in the Western U.S. and drought-challenged Colorado River basin. Protect the Flows (PTF), a business coalition advancing water conservation, innovations and technologies, and the protection of the Colorado River, applauds the President for this commitment to solving the pressing and ongoing water challenges in the West.

"Funding smart water policy in the west makes good business sense, said **Kevin Tilden, Vice President, California American Water**. "The budget released today shows the White House is leading the way with solutions to address western drought by funding programs such as WaterSMART which saves over 180 billion gallons of water each year—or enough water for 2.2 million people. As a business, when we see that type of return on investment, it only makes sense to keep investing in the projects that are delivering results."

In addition to providing \$23.4 million for WaterSMART grants, the budget request also includes \$15 million in additional funding for the Department of Agriculture to support agricultural practices that conserve water and build healthy soils that retain water.

"It is welcome news to see the White House is committing to additional funding for programs that drive innovative water management solutions in the drought-challenged Colorado River Basin," said **Warren Gorowitz, Vice President of Sustainability at Phoenix-based Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply**.

Businesses across America play major roles in water and river conservation through innovating and incorporating water saving practices in their operations. Companies have invested millions of dollars in updating technologies and process changes that often result in 15 to 50 percent water use reductions. Telecommunications giant AT&T, Las Vegas-based Caesars International, Intel Corporation, PepsiCo, and MGM International are prime examples of PTF coalition companies saving hundreds of thousands of dollars annually while conserving limited water supplies.

At PTF's Business of Water Summit 2016 in Phoenix March 30-31, hundreds of large and small companies, business associations, water providers and government leaders (Arizona Governor Doug Ducey, U.S. Senator Jeff Flake, and Deputy Interior Secretary Mike Connor have been invited to speak), will meet to share innovations and best practices aimed at meeting the West's greatest water challenge – doing more with less.

"Investing in water conservation in the Colorado River basin is imperative for the health of businesses and communities in the West," said **Jennifer Vervier, Director of Strategy and Sustainability, New Belgium Brewing Company**. "The President's budget demonstrates a commitment to drought response and water efficiencies. We applaud their support for programs offering proven, common-sense solutions that will help the Colorado River basin now."

The most critical water challenge facing the West is how to best manage use of the precious water in the Colorado River, made even more difficult in the face of ongoing drought and climate change. The river system supplies drinking water for 40 million people and irrigates 5 million acres of land that grows 15 percent of our nation's crops. In early 2015, an Arizona State University study for PTF found that nearly two-thirds of the Southwest's economic value is dependent on the Colorado River. In fact, more than \$1.4 trillion in economic activity, \$870 billion in wages, and 16 million jobs annually rely on the health of the Colorado River system. Additionally, the river attracts millions of tourists and outdoor enthusiasts from around the globe and enhances the quality of life that helps businesses attract and retain employees.

With the stakes so high, PTF supports the steps President Obama has taken in the FY17 budget to address our growing water challenges. We are aligned with the President in making drought response and healthy river flows priorities across the West and the Colorado River basin. Our mission in business, as it is in smart water policy, is to provide services that are vital to the economy.

LINK TO DOI FY17 Budget WaterSMART Fact Sheet:  
[https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/FY2017\\_BIB\\_DH047.pdf](https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/FY2017_BIB_DH047.pdf)

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*Protect the Flows (PTF) is a nonpartisan business coalition advancing water conservation, innovations and technologies, and protection of the Colorado River. We are a network of over 1,100 businesses that depend upon and support a healthy and thriving Colorado River system for the economic vitality it provides. Members of PTF range from main street retailers to Fortune 500 companies, all of which support timely, common-sense solutions to the water challenges facing the Southwest.*