



March 3, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Secretary Zinke:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as Secretary of the Interior. [Business for Water Stewardship](#) is a network of over 1,200 businesses from main street retailers to Fortune 500 companies working on issues of water sustainability and the economic impacts associated with dwindling water supplies. As business leaders, we believe keeping water flowing in the Colorado River and its tributaries will safeguard businesses, enhance quality of life, and promote burgeoning recreation and tourism economies in the seven states through which the Colorado River system runs. The Colorado River is a major economic driver -- pumping [\\$1.4 trillion into the country's economy](#) every year.

In addition to the business community, voters too, view the Colorado River as critical to the West's economy, a national treasure, and an attraction for tourism and recreation among residents of the basin. In the just-released, 2017 [Colorado College Conservation in the West survey](#), 80 percent of western voters feel low levels of water in western rivers are a serious issue.

We must do all we can to work to combat drought, and find ways to better conserve and use the water resources in the Colorado River basin. We encourage you to join us in supporting cost-effective, common-sense solutions to protect the Colorado River, focusing especially on proven conservation measures to reduce water use.

One proven and successful program doing just that is the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grant program. These grants provide cost-shared funding to states, tribes, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to help underwrite projects that drive water infrastructure modernization and efficiencies, conserve water and ultimately keep water in rivers. Since 2010, Reclamation has allocated more than \$135 million in competitively awarded grants for 243 projects in 15 Western states. In 2017, grants will also be awarded to support local water marketing activities and small-scale water efficiency projects.

In the face of chronic drought and low water levels in Lake Mead, Lake Powell and our rivers, these projects are important for Western cities and communities, and businesses, to continue to thrive. **That's why we encourage the president's budget to include a request for \$30 million in FY 2018 for WaterSMART.**

As a leader who served in our U.S. military, you understand the importance of striving for greater efficiency. We look forward to working with you to conserve water in the West and boost efficiency across the Colorado River basin.

Business for Water Stewardship works hand-in-hand with businesses to advance solutions necessary to sustain the well-being of our communities, economies, and rivers. We provide a portfolio of services that catalyze business engagement and leadership in environmental water stewardship. In closing, we ask you to join business leaders here in the basin for an introductory meeting to discuss water risk and a secure water future for business, communities and the environment. Our staff will begin working with your team to coordinate on a meeting like this.

Sincerely,

Business for Water Stewardship
Craig Mackey, Policy Director

Ewing Irrigation
Phoenix, AZ

New Belgium Brewing Company
Fort Collins, CO

Salt River Rafting
Phoenix, AZ

Backdoor Sports Ltd.
Steamboat Springs, CO

O.A.R.S
Angel Camp, CA

Solar Smart Living
Anthony, NM

Wilderness Aware Rafting
Buena Vista, CO

Xanadu Management, Inc.
Lake Havasu, NV

Marble Distilling Company and Marble Inn
Carbondale, CO

Spinner Fall Guide Service
Dutch John, UT

4 Corners Riversports
Durango, CO

Western River Expeditions
Moab, UT

Mountain Waters Rafting
Durango, CO

Moab Adventure Center
Moab, UT

Fishpond USA
Denver, CO

Silver Bullet Water Treatment
Denver, CO

Rep Your Water
Denver, CO