



Senator Feinstein Moves Ahead on Water Recycling to Increase Water Supplies in California

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Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today announced three pieces of legislation that authorize water recycling and other water supply projects in an effort to increase the water supply in California.

“California and other western states need innovative programs to protect the environment while meeting the future water needs of our rapidly growing population. The national ReNew Act will help to ensure that water reclamation and reuse programs receive the federal funding they deserve,” Senator Feinstein said. **“In California, water recycling is a critical part of our water future because it allows us to stretch existing water supplies to address the many needs that exist.”**

The three pieces of legislation announced today are:

- The Reclaiming the Nation’s Water Act (ReNew), co-sponsored with Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), which would amend the Reclamation and Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to clarify the federal role in developing new sources of water and help local governments receive a dependable and timely supply of federal assistance for water reuse projects.
- The Water Recycling and Riverside-Corona Feeder Act, which would authorize four water recycling projects: the Inland Empire Regional Water Recycling Initiative, the Riverside-Corona Feeder, City of Corona Water Recycling Project, and the Yucaipa Valley Water Supply Renewal Project. These projects are expected to produce approximately 161,000 acre-feet of new water annually in the Inland Empire, one of the most rapidly growing regions of the United States.
- The North Bay Water Reuse Program Act, authorizing a program to provide for the collection of treated urban wastewater and its conveyance to agricultural growers in Northern California for purposes of irrigation. The North Bay Water Reuse Program would be the first cost-shared water reclamation and reuse project in Northern California, and the first to provide water primarily for agricultural and environmental uses.

“These vital projects would help California meet its water supply needs and reduce our dependence on waters from the Colorado River and Northern California,” Senator Feinstein said.

The Senate’s Water and Power Subcommittee is expected to hold a hearing this month on the ReNew Act and the Water Recycling and Riverside-Corona Feeder Act. The North Bay Water Reuse Program Act is expected to be discussed at a future date.

The ReNew Act clarifies that the purpose of the Title XVI Program would be to assist in the development of permanent local and regional water reclamation and reuse projects, and further improve water reclamation and reuse technologies through research and demonstration activities. The legislation also provides new authority for the Secretary of the Interior to review non-federal water reclamation and reuse project proposals, pursuant to new standards and procedures for such review.

The Water Recycling and Riverside-Corona Feeder Act is intended to be the companion to two bills in the House of Representatives: HR 802, sponsored by Representatives David Dreier, Grace Napolitano, Ken Calvert, Joe Baca, and Gary Miller; and HR 1008, sponsored by Representatives Ken Calvert, Jerry Lewis, Joe Baca and Darrell Issa. HR 802 and HR 1008 each have passed the House of Representatives twice, in both this Congress and the previous Congress.

As regulations continue to tighten restrictions on wastewater discharges into the San Francisco Bay, communities are faced with major financial challenges as they determine the best way to discharge their treated wastewater. At the same time, agricultural producers in the North Bay region are facing serious water shortages resulting from a serious overdraft of groundwater. The North Bay Water Reuse Program Act will solve both problems together.

The three pieces of legislation are supported by environmental and agriculture groups, as well as business leaders in California.

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