

The Western Water Storage Infrastructure Act

Enhancing Federal Water Storage Investments, Continuing Science-Based Adaptive Management of California Water Resources.

Background:

President Obama signed the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act into law on December 16, 2016. Among other measures, this legislation authorized investments in surface and groundwater storage and efforts to improve adaptive management of California's vast and complex water system with the goal of providing increased water supplies without adversely impacting listed species.

Need for Legislation:

Due to the vast need for improved and expanded water storage in the arid western United States, the \$335 million for water storage authorized in the WIIN Act was expended in FY2019. In the intervening years Congress provided funding beyond the authorized amount, but a new storage authorization is needed to provide funding certainty.

With the implementation of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), federal support is necessary for the expansion of groundwater banking and other types of groundwater storage projects to improve water supply reliability and drought resiliency in a California that is increasingly met with intense drought made worse by climate change.

The operational management provisions of the WIIN Act are set to expire in December 2021, and legislation extending these authorities is needed. Continuing these authorities are critical for implementing the Voluntary Agreements to update and implement the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan in California.

The Bill:

- Authorizes \$800 million over five years for surface and groundwater storage projects and the necessary supporting water conveyance facilities. Maintains an all-of-the-above strategy to allow for flexible storage solutions.
- Extends operational and management authorities under the WIIN Act for 8 years to provide continued water supply benefits without adverse impacts to listed species.