

Summary of STREAM Act

Senators Feinstein, Kelly and Sinema, introduced May 2022

- **Expedites non-federal storage projects with less than \$250 million in federal funding, water recycling, and desalination projects by allowing Interior to approve the projects.**
 - This provision is needed following the *Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act's* expiration in December 2021. Absent this provision, Congress must individually authorize all water recycling, desalination and storage projects, with the exception of projects that receive construction funding under the bipartisan infrastructure legislation.
 - Allowing projects to proceed with Interior's approval avoids frequent and lengthy delays in the Congressional approval process.
- Authorizes \$750 million in funding for surface and groundwater storage and conveyance projects (including natural water retention and release projects).
- Authorizes \$300 million for water recycling projects, \$150 million for desalination projects, \$100 million for projects to provide drinking water for disadvantaged communities, and \$250 million for environmental restoration projects.
- Establishes a Reclamation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation program, with low-interest loans similar to WIFIA, except this program is for water supply projects recommended by the Bureau of Reclamation. Expected to cost-effectively make available \$8 to \$12 billion in lending authority under OMB scoring protocols, at an appropriations cost of only \$150 million.
- **Requires Congressional approval of future federal storage projects** and non-federal storage projects with over \$250 million in federal funding. Congressional approval is appropriate for federal and the most expensive projects. Shortens timeline for Congressional approval of these projects through a "Reclamation WRDA" process where Reclamation notifies Congress of completed feasibility studies each year to set up an orderly process to authorize projects.
- **Grandfathers storage projects that receive construction funding from the \$1.15 billion provided for storage in the bipartisan infrastructure law** so they can receive storage funds authorized under this bill and they do not need further authorization to complete construction.
- **Federal non-reimbursable grants are available for non-Federal storage projects funded by the bill only if they have public benefits** that are provided either directly as part of the project or through federal spending on environmental benefits in the same watershed approved as part of a watershed plan adopted together with the project. Non-federal storage projects with water supply benefits only are eligible for reimbursable funding.
- **Projects to repair aging Reclamation infrastructure are authorized to include modified components with additional public benefits or other project benefits**, if the modification increases costs by less than 25% (or less than \$25 million for projects under \$100 million).
- **During droughts, Interior can implement emergency drought relief projects through building permanent facilities, if those facilities are supported by the State where the projects are located and require a federal investment of less than \$30 million.**
 - Current law allows funding only for temporary facilities, excepting groundwater wells.
 - Given the increased frequency of droughts, it is more efficient to install permanent facilities rather than frequently installing and removing temporary facilities.