

# United States Senate

February 18, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Chairman Leahy,


As the West experiences the worst megadrought in over 1200 years, we urge you to include \$200 million in emergency drought funding, \$116 million to address drought impacts on Bureau of Reclamation revenue-financed programs, and \$300 million in emergency agricultural assistance funding in the omnibus (proposed language attached).


What makes this megadrought so challenging is that climate change magnifies the impacts beyond what our communities can withstand. The Colorado River, the lifeblood of seven western states, could lose 29 percent of its flow by the 2050s and 55 percent by 2100, and federal assistance is essential to adapt to the dramatically lower flows. Many disadvantaged and tribal communities across the West are simply running out of water to drink. Other communities, such as the Klamath Basin, desperately need help to avoid an economic calamity. In California's Central Valley, the nation's grocery basket, emergency drought aid could preserve water for endangered salmon without jeopardizing agriculture. In Arizona, one of the fastest growing states in the country that is also crucial to domestic food supply, communities and farmers are facing shortages, inefficiencies, and hydropower loss that threaten communities and economic growth.

Our farmers' struggles are further compounded by shipping delays at our nation's ports. Difficulties in securing containers, inefficient processing, and unscrupulous practices by ocean carriers have resulted in a backlog of agricultural products and an estimated 22 percent loss in foreign agricultural sales. Although some products can withstand this delay, spoiled food simply goes to waste, to the detriment of farmers and consumers alike. As Congress considers changes for the maritime regulatory environment, we urge you to provide direct relief to our farmers hit hardest by slowdowns and disruptions in our supply chain.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. This is a real emergency for our states, and we appreciate any help you can provide.

Sincerely,

  
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

  
Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Krysten Sinema  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator