



**POSITION STATEMENT
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
in support of
RURAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS & PROJECTS
Washington, D.C.
March 22, 2016**

WHEREAS, much of the West is characterized by its aridity and drought which highlights the fact that water availability is an ever present constraint defining our economic and environmental well-being and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, this is particularly true for many small rural communities struggling to meet future water supply needs and comply with present federal mandates; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Reclamation's rural water program, USDA's Rural Utilities Service water and wastewater programs and other continuing efforts seek to identify rural water needs and evaluate rural water supply projects and the demand for new projects; and

WHEREAS, there is an important role for the States in the conduct of appraisal investigations and feasibility studies, preparation of feasibility reports, and identifying funding sources; and

WHEREAS, with respect to funding sources, we continue to strongly support the expenditure of Reclamation Fund revenues for their intended purposes, including rural water projects, as authorized by the Congress; and

WHEREAS, existing federal and state rural water and wastewater programs must be coordinated to facilitate the most efficient and effective solution to meeting the water needs of non-Federal project sponsors; and

WHEREAS, upgrading and replacing inadequate rural water systems may require finding new water supplies, which will entail acquiring necessary state water rights; and

WHEREAS, continuing compliance with state water laws and interstate compacts is vital; and

WHEREAS, opportunities exist to leverage non-federal funding through federal loan guarantees and other financial instruments to ensure that water districts can access private sources of financing; and

WHEREAS, water districts and individual water users depend on federal and non-federal infrastructure for their livelihood and the risk of default is minimal.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Western States Water Council supports federal and state legislative and administrative actions to authorize and implement rural water supply projects and programs that enhance water supplies and promote economic development, through streamlined permitting processes and appropriate financing instruments, while appropriately protecting environmental resources and taxpayers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Western States Water Council also supports the development and implementation of appropriate water conservation programs at all levels to minimize demands placed on our natural resources and ecosystems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that rural water project development should recognize and ensure consistency with state water law and regulatory authority.