



**RESOLUTION
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
Urging Congress to Support**

**SUBSEASONAL to SEASONAL
WEATHER RESEARCH, FORECASTING, and INNOVATION**

**Adopted by Executive Committee Action
March 6, 2020**

WHEREAS, Western States experience great subseasonal, seasonal, and annual variability in precipitation, with serious impacts and consequences for water supply planning and management, drought and flood preparedness and response, water rights administration, operation of water projects, and aging water infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, sound decision-making to protect life and property by reducing flood risks and to inform decisions involving billions of dollars of economic activity for urban centers, agriculture, hydropower generation, and fisheries depends on our ability to observe, understand, model, predict, and adapt to precipitation variability on operational time scales ranging from a few weeks to a season or more; and

WHEREAS, investments in observations, modeling, high-performance computing capabilities, research, and operational forecasting of precipitation provide an opportunity to significantly improve planning and water project operations to reduce flood damages, mitigate economic and environmental damages, and maximize water storage and water use efficiency; and

WHEREAS, operating aging water infrastructure in the face of growing and often competing water supply and water management demands requires that state, federal, tribal, and local agencies optimize operations for maximum efficiency and seek innovations, such as improved subseasonal to seasonal forecasting (S2S), to support their decision-making; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility for operational weather forecasting rests with the National Weather Service (NWS), and currently NWS has minimal skill in making S2S outlooks; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to prioritize National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research and weather modeling to improve operational sub-seasonal and seasonal precipitation forecasts, with attention to Western needs; and

WHEREAS, the Congress enacted the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, which requires NOAA to take specified actions regarding S2S forecasting and to submit a report on improving S2S predictions to Congress by October 2018; and

WHEREAS, that report has not yet been submitted to Congress.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western States Water Council supports the implementation of the legislation, authorizing federal action to improve precipitation forecasting at S2S scales in the West, and urges NOAA to move forward with pilot projects for improving S2S winter precipitation forecasting in the mountain west and summer precipitation forecasting in the Great Plains.