



Position No. 443
Revised and Readopted
(Originally Position #361 adopted April 3, 2014
See also Position #401, 4/14/17)

**RESOLUTION
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
regarding the
RECLAMATION SAFETY OF DAMS ACT OF 1978**

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

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Reclamation's dams and reservoirs are the primary source of water for numerous regions and communities throughout the West; and

WHEREAS, Reclamation's dams and reservoirs provide essential benefits such as drinking water, irrigation, hydropower, flood control, and recreation, while also supporting wildlife and habitat; and

WHEREAS, the safe operation and maintenance of Reclamation's dams is critical to sustaining these benefits and preventing dam failure, which threatens lives as well as private and public property; and

WHEREAS, most of Reclamation's dams are older than 50 years, with an average age of 70 years, and the agency has identified recommended modifications to prevent safety or performance issues; and

WHEREAS, maintaining and rehabilitating dams and related infrastructure is one of the most serious problems that Reclamation currently faces; and

WHEREAS, the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 provides Reclamation with authority to preserve and maintain the structural safety of dams under its stewardship; and

WHEREAS, in FY2016, the Congress provided an additional \$1.1 billion in budget authority (P.L. 114-113, Section 204), giving Reclamation several more years before reaching its spending ceiling; and

WHEREAS, failure to appropriate such sums as are necessary for Reclamation's dam safety activities will increase the chances of dam failures by hindering the agency's ability to carry out critical dam safety rehabilitation and modernization efforts, risking loss of life and public and private property.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western States Water Council urges the Administration and Congress to work together and determine such sums as may be necessary for Reclamation to effectively carry out its dam safety program in a timely manner.