

WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION & UTILIZATION ACT

Since 1902, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has constructed dams, hydropower plants, canals, irrigation conveyances and related infrastructure across 17 Western States. While owned by the federal government, many of these individual facilities are operated by local water management agencies. Local operators are responsible for annual, routine operation, maintenance, and replacement-related costs. Today, 80% of the BOR's facilities are more than 50-years-old and are in need of major upgrades or replacement costs beyond regular maintenance, including safety-related dam repairs and possible reevaluation of storage functions highlighted by persistent drought in the Western United States.

Recognizing the upgrade or replacement needs, in 2009 Congress gave the Bureau of Reclamation authority to fund "extraordinary maintenance" (XM) work using existing appropriations and allowing local operators to repay the costs over time. This authority has rarely been used because the process to initiate an XM project by operators is not well-defined, and the BOR is reluctant to pursue XM projects because it requires a set aside of large sums of limited appropriations, taking that money away from other BOR priorities. In addition, once XM costs are repaid by operators, it goes into the Reclamation Fund which is inaccessible for future XM projects.

THE WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION & UTILIZATION ACT

ADDRESSES MAINTENANCE BACKLOG

AT WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- Creates a clearly-defined application and review process that gives water users and local operators more authority to initiate XM projects with extended repayment.
- Creates a revolving "Aging Infrastructure Account" for maintenance projects and allows repayment of funds to be used by BOR on future XM projects without further appropriations.

STRENGTHENS THE "SAFETY OF DAMS" PROGRAM

TO IMPROVE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF DAMS ACROSS THE U.S.

- The Safety of Dams program helps fund major modifications to dams' structural integrity. BOR expects to reach the current statutory cap by 2022, but given the uncertainty about the final cost of several projects, it could happen sooner.
- The bill would raise the Safety of Dam authorization by \$550M to better match the workload estimate.

PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY IN RESERVOIR STORAGE

FOR FLOOD CONTROL DURING LOW-RISK TIMES OF YEAR

- Most BOR and non-federal dams are operated pursuant to Army Corps of Engineers Water Control Manuals that specify exactly how much water should be released from a dam and certain water elevations.
- The bill creates a pilot program to give more flexibility for reservoir operators to temporarily store water in dedicated flood control space during certain low risk times of the year.