



For Immediate Release

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## Report: Need for Energy and Climate Legislation Boils Down to Water

BOULDER, CO - A new report shines a brighter spotlight on what western water managers already know: climate change threatens western water supplies, and energy and water planning are on a collision course. The report, "[Protecting the Lifeline of the West: How Climate and Clean Energy Policies Can Safeguard Water](#)" urges federal legislators to act now to preserve western water resources in the face of increasing demand and diminishing supplies.

The report's release coincides with the U.S. Senate's return from Fourth of July recess to take up energy and climate legislation this week.

"The West's elected leaders know what a challenge it is to meet the water needs of their district's cities, farms, and environment, and how important it is to secure safe, reliable water supplies for the future," said report co-author Stacy Tellinghuisen of Western Resource Advocates. "Passing climate legislation now is their chance to do just that."

Climate and clean energy policy is also smart water policy. Transitioning away from forms of energy that emit health-harming greenhouse gases can also save water in the West. In Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah, power plants consume enough water meet to the combined demands of Denver, Phoenix, and Albuquerque.

"One aspect of the global warming challenge that is not often talked about inside the Beltway is the threat posed by global warming to the West's most critical natural resource -- water," said Dan Grossman, Rocky Mountain Regional Director for Environmental Defense Fund. "In addition to helping prevent the increased droughts that are associated with climate change, developing clean energy technologies will also let us move away

from water-intensive energy sources so we can devote more of our water to meet the growing needs of Western cities, agriculture, recreation and the environment."

The report, released today, outlines why it is critical that western Senators help pass a strong climate and clean energy policy that will support sound water management. National climate policy can augment measures that westerners are already pursuing, including the City of Albuquerque's water conservation program, which now saves 19 billion gallons of water and 137,000 tons of carbon each year, and Xcel Energy's investment in wind power, which saves an estimated 1.6 billion gallons of water in Colorado. Water saved by transitioning to cleaner, less water-intensive energy sources can meet other future water needs and maintain higher streamflows.

"Nature delivers climate change by altering our rivers and streams. What we may see in the future may be very different from what we see today," said Eric Kuhn, General Manager of the Colorado River Water Conservation District.

Long term drought can have tremendous economic impacts in the rural West where local economies depend on agriculture and recreation.

Kent Pepler, President of the Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union believes appropriate federal action can provide hope. "Our nation needs a coordinated response to the challenges of climate change that threaten our water supply, the growing season, and the viability of farming and ranching."

"Those of us who rely on rivers for our livelihoods are already seeing the impacts of climate change - and we're very concerned. Our concerns demand action," said Julie Eaton, a fly fishing guide and co-owner of Eaton Outfitters in Montana.

*The full report is available at -*

*<http://www.westernresourceadvocates.org/water/lifeline/lifeline.pdf>. The executive summary is available at - <http://www.westernresourceadvocates.org/water/lifeline/lifelineES.pdf>.*

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***Western Resource Advocates***, is a leading regional organization dedicated to protecting the West's land, air, and water. *Western Resource Advocates recognizes that success can only come from working collaboratively with other conservation groups, hunters and fishermen, ranchers, American Indians, and all those who seek a sustainable future for The West, visit [www.westernresourceadvocates.org](http://www.westernresourceadvocates.org)*

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