

# THE THREAT OF CLIMATE CHANGE & DROUGHT

HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE CHAIR RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

May 2021

Climate change-induced drought imperils our nation's rivers and ecosystems and threatens to dramatically reduce our drinking, industrial, and agricultural water supply. The Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife oversees the Bureau of Reclamation, which supplies and manages water for millions of Americans in the western United States.

## CLIMATE THREATS TO WESTERN WATER SECURITY

The western United States is currently experiencing severe drought conditions, and scientific assessments show that recent western droughts have been worsened by climate change. California experienced its worst drought in 1,200 years from 2012 to 2016, and is currently seeing one of the driest consecutive two-year periods on record.

Climate pressures – including warming temperatures, shrinking snowpack, more volatile precipitation, and rising seas – will increasingly limit water availability for millions of Americans. Federal investments in modern infrastructure can aid drought-stricken regions and ensure a reliable water supply for American communities.

Not all impacts on people are equal. Tribal and rural communities are disproportionately impacted by drought and drinking water shortages.

## CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FOR WESTERN WATER SECURITY

The Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife is working hard to advance federal water policy that promotes future drought resiliency through forward-thinking, collaborative policy solutions.

Chair Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) led the effort to pass the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan Authorization Act in 2019. The law activated conservation measures and water management changes to safeguard supplies for the 40 million people who rely on the Colorado River, which is facing a severe, ongoing 20-year drought worsened by climate change.

Democrats are working to advance policy solutions that provide immediate and long-term drought relief. Solutions include Rep. Jared Huffman's (D-Calif.) FUTURE Western Water Infrastructure and Drought Resiliency Act to expand funding for new water infrastructure, including drought-proof water recycling projects like well-designed desalination and water recycling projects. The Subcommittee is working to advance legislation to expand the use of modern water management tools, data, and technologies; support communities lacking clean drinking water; advance tribal water rights settlements that fund tribal water infrastructure; and promote watershed health for the benefit of downstream communities, fish, and wildlife.