

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

July 22, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Jacob Lew  
Director  
The Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Michael L. Connor  
Commissioner  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar, Director Lew, and Commissioner Connor:

As you plan for budget allocations for Fiscal Year 2012 and beyond, we write to urge you to provide the highest possible level of funding for the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System (LCRWS). We also request a joint meeting with all of you to discuss a path forward in ensuring this important project receives higher consideration when determining the Administration's infrastructure funding priorities.

We were disappointed at the FY11 level of funding for Lewis and Clark Regional Water System, which barely keeps the project's lights on and does nothing to move the project forward in any way. We were also disheartened to see that the Administration's budget recommendation for FY12 included only \$493,000, a level that would bring new construction to a complete halt. In addition to the recent budget numbers, we were concerned that funding requested for congressionally authorized rural water supply projects was reduced so drastically in comparison with other Bureau of Reclamation activities.

As we have previously discussed with you and your staff, this authorized project is critical for economic development and job creation. The JBS pork processing plant in Worthington, Minnesota is one of the largest in the nation and has wanted to expand its operations for several years. However, those plans have been delayed because the city cannot provide additional water.

In Madison, South Dakota, Mayor Gene Hexom has said the city would not be able to accommodate the water needs of a major business or industry looking to relocate to that area. These examples reflect a chilling effect on economic development efforts and the expansion of value-added agriculture.

LCRWS shows great promise for economic development. A dairy plant chose to locate in Hull, Iowa based upon an "emergency connection" with LCRWS and the promise of a permanent water supply in the future. The plant currently employs 100 people in a town with less than 2,000 residents and is expected to increase to 135 jobs later this year. Through the jobs it will create during construction, and the countless economic development opportunities it will create once the water starts flowing, this project will have a huge economic benefit on the tri-state region, which is why each of us believes it is critical that the project receive consistent and prioritized funding from the Bureau of Reclamation.

We certainly understand the severe budget constraints facing our country and appreciate the need to balance priorities. However, it is difficult to understand how a project such as this – one that has been authorized, whose local members and three state partners have prepaid 99% of their cost share (a combined total of \$153.5 million), and has shown such promise for economic development – would receive such inadequate funding.

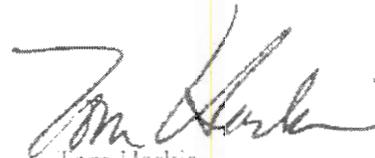
After we met with OMB to discuss funding for LCRWS last fall, we asked you to provide us with a list of new starts projects recommended by OMB in the coming fiscal year. It would seem to us that funding a project that is 50 percent complete, that will provide drinking water to over 300,000 people in three states, and that shows such promise in creating new jobs should be a higher priority than projects that have not yet begun.

It is in that spirit we would like to further discuss this issue with you. Our schedulers will be in contact with your staff to determine a time when all of you can be available for this important discussion.

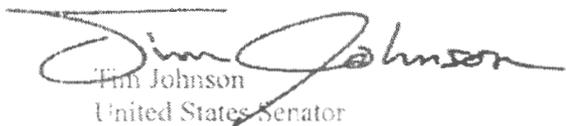
Sincerely,



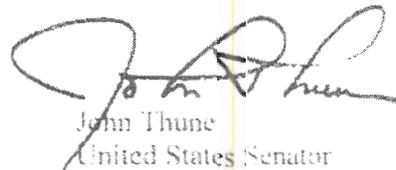
Charles Grassley  
United States Senator



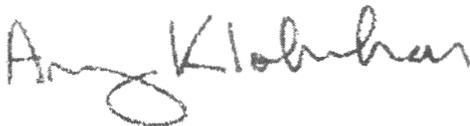
Tom Harkin  
United States Senator



Tim Johnson  
United States Senator



John Thune  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator

*Steve King*

Steve King  
Member of Congress

*Kristi Noem*

Kristi Noem  
Member of Congress

*Tim Walz*

Tim Walz  
Member of Congress

OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

2011 JUL 25 PM 4:30

RECEIVED

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**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

January 19, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Michael L. Connor  
Commissioner  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

The Honorable Sally Eriesson  
Director for Natural Resource Programs  
The Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar, Commissioner Connor and Director Eriesson:

Thank you for meeting with us to discuss the critical importance of the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System (LCRWS) project for the residents and businesses of Eastern South Dakota, Northwestern Iowa and Southwestern Minnesota.

As we discussed during the meeting, the Fiscal Year 2012 Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation budget request of \$493,000 for LCRWS is completely inadequate. At that level of funding, the project would never be completed as the mounting costs due to inflation would far exceed this level of annual federal resources.

In addition, the three states and local partners have already paid 99.7 percent of the state and local share of the project leaving LCRWS completely dependent upon federal funds to make progress and complete the project. Compounding the lack of federal funds are the millions of dollars in additional costs to the communities we represent because this project is not yet complete.

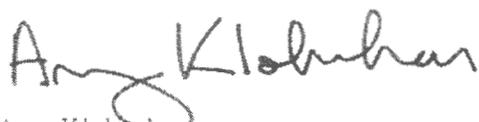
In the FY2012 Omnibus Appropriations Act, Congress provided \$30 million in additional funding for ongoing work on authorized rural water projects. The Conference Report includes language describing Congressional intent for the allocation of these additional resources to, "advance and complete ongoing work, improve water supply reliability, improve water deliveries, enhance regional or local economic development, promote job growth or for critical backlog maintenance and rehabilitation activities."

The state and community partners of LCRWS share the concerns that are outlined by the Conference Report language. However, we stress that the Department of Interior and Bureau of Reclamation consider other factors in allocating and prioritizing limited federal resources across the authorized rural water projects. These additional factors include percent of the state and local share that has been pre-paid, and the anticipated number of people expected to be served by the project once complete.

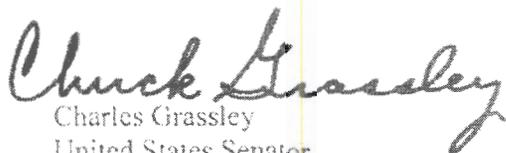
We look forward to reviewing the report, which is due on January 22, 2012, on how the \$30 million in additional resources for ongoing work are to be distributed that meets the factors outlined in the Conference Report but also the additional factors outlined above, which we discussed at our November meeting. We also hope that the FY2013 budget reflects our discussions about better prioritization when it comes to maximizing taxpayer dollars, and provides LCRWS with a level of funding to advance the project in a meaningful way.

Thank you again for your time and attention to the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System. This project is a priority for the communities we represent, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you to ensure it receives appropriate levels of funding this year, in FY2013 and each and every year until the project is completed.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



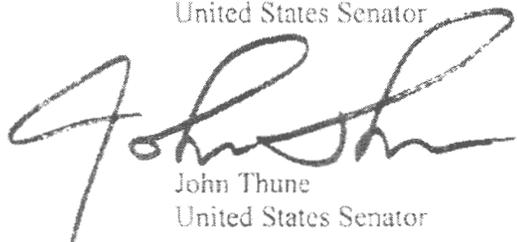
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United States Senator



Tom Harkin  
United States Senator



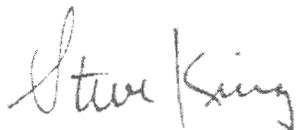
Tim Johnson  
United States Senator



John Thune  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Steve King  
Member of Congress



Tim Walz  
Member of Congress



Kristi Noem  
Member of Congress

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Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Michael L. Connor  
Commissioner  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

The Honorable Sally Ericsson  
Director for Natural Resource Programs  
The Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar, Commissioner Connor and Director Ericsson:

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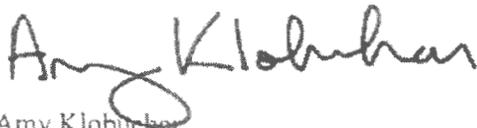
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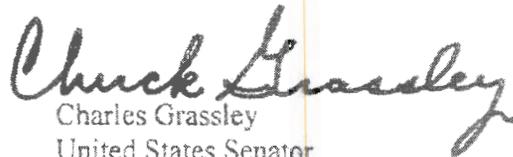
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Thank you again for your time and attention to the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System. This project is a priority for the communities we represent, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you to ensure it receives appropriate levels of funding this year, in FY2013 and each and every year until the project is completed.

Sincerely,



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United States Senator



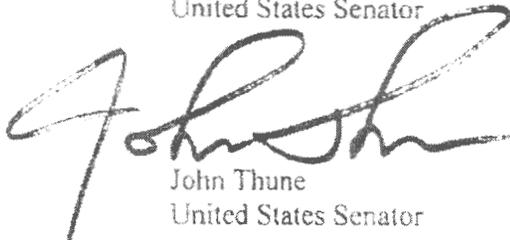
Charles Grassley  
United States Senator



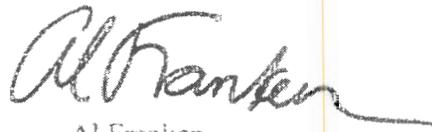
Tom Harkin  
United States Senator



Tim Johnson  
United States Senator



John Thune  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Steve King  
Member of Congress



Tim Walz  
Member of Congress



Kristi Noem  
Member of Congress



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

FEB 10 2012

The Honorable Tim Walz  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Walz:

Thank you for your January 19, 2012, letter regarding the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System and for allocating \$30 million of additional funding for authorized rural water projects in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012. Specifically, you requested that we consider factors, including population served and the percent of non-Federal cost share prepaid, in addition to the criteria specified in the Conference Report.

As you recall during our meeting on November 3, 2011, Commissioner Michael Connor stated his staff was evaluating new criteria for allocating rural water project funding. He also stated that although these criteria were not finalized, the Bureau of Reclamation would use the new criteria to allocate the additional funding provided in the FY 2012 appropriation. These new criteria give consideration to the factors you identified in your letter, along with the factors referenced in the Conference Report and others. Further, the new criteria also consider the Department of the Interior's trust responsibility to Native Americans.

We also recognize your concern that without sufficient funding levels the Lewis and Clark project cannot be completed. Since this is a challenge for all rural water projects, it is paramount that we formulate budgets and allocate limited funding so that progress toward completion remains a high priority. In this manner, we can optimize our approach to complete all of the authorized rural water projects.

We have prepared a report for Congress that responded to the requirement in the Conference Report, with a full explanation of the criteria as described above. The Rural Water Program faces many challenges in the current budget environment. We believe the criteria applied to the additional funding addresses the factors included in the Conference Report while addressing critical needs and the ability to make progress towards the completion of meaningful phases of the authorized rural water projects.

We look forward to working with you as we continue to refine the criteria and complete construction of these important rural water projects.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar

Identical Letter Sent To:

Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Al Franken  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Kristi Noem  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Johnson  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Steve King  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

cc: Mr. Troy Larson  
Executive Director  
Lewis & Clark Regional Water System  
46986 Monty Street  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

FEB 10 2012

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your January 19, 2012, letter regarding the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System and for allocating \$30 million of additional funding for authorized rural water projects in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012. Specifically, you requested that we consider factors, including population served and the percent of non-Federal cost share prepaid, in addition to the criteria specified in the Conference Report.

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We look forward to working with you as we continue to refine the criteria and complete construction of these important rural water projects.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar

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Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Al Franken  
United States Senate  
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Honorable Tim Walz  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

cc: Mr. Troy Larson  
Executive Director  
Lewis & Clark Regional Water System  
46986 Monty Street  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

FEB 10 2012

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

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We look forward to working with you as we continue to refine the criteria and complete construction of these important rural water projects.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar

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United States Senate  
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Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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Honorable Tim Johnson  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Al Franken  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Steve King  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Kristi Noem  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tim Walz  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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Executive Director  
Lewis & Clark Regional Water System  
46986 Monty Street  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

FEB 10 2012

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Noem:

Thank you for your January 19, 2012, letter regarding the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System and for allocating \$30 million of additional funding for authorized rural water projects in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012. Specifically, you requested that we consider factors, including population served and the percent of non-Federal cost share prepaid, in addition to the criteria specified in the Conference Report.

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We also recognize your concern that without sufficient funding levels the Lewis and Clark project cannot be completed. Since this is a challenge for all rural water projects, it is paramount that we formulate budgets and allocate limited funding so that progress toward completion remains a high priority. In this manner, we can optimize our approach to complete all of the authorized rural water projects.

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We look forward to working with you as we continue to refine the criteria and complete construction of these important rural water projects.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar

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Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Johnson  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Steve King  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Al Franken  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Walz  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

cc: Mr. Troy Larson  
Executive Director  
Lewis & Clark Regional Water System  
46986 Monty Street  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

FEB 10 2012

The Honorable Steve King  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative King:

Thank you for your January 19, 2012, letter regarding the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System and for allocating \$30 million of additional funding for authorized rural water projects in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012. Specifically, you requested that we consider factors, including population served and the percent of non-Federal cost share prepaid, in addition to the criteria specified in the Conference Report.

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We look forward to working with you as we continue to refine the criteria and complete construction of these important rural water projects.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar

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Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Kristi Noem  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Johnson  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Al Franken  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Walz  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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Executive Director  
Lewis & Clark Regional Water System  
46986 Monty Street  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

FEB 10 2012

The Honorable Al Franken  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Franken:

Thank you for your January 19, 2012, letter regarding the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System and for allocating \$30 million of additional funding for authorized rural water projects in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012. Specifically, you requested that we consider factors, including population served and the percent of non-Federal cost share prepaid, in addition to the criteria specified in the Conference Report.

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We look forward to working with you as we continue to refine the criteria and complete construction of these important rural water projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Salazar".

Ken Salazar

Identical Letter Sent To:

Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
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Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tim Walz  
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cc: Mr. Troy Larson  
Executive Director, Lewis & Clark Regional Water System  
46986 Monty Street  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

FEB 10 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
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cc: Mr. Troy Larson  
Executive Director, Lewis & Clark Regional Water System  
46986 Monty Street  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

**FEB 10 2012**

The Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

Thank you for your January 19, 2012, letter regarding the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System and for allocating \$30 million of additional funding for authorized rural water projects in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012. Specifically, you requested that we consider factors, including population served and the percent of non-Federal cost share prepaid, in addition to the criteria specified in the Conference Report.

As you recall during our meeting on November 3, 2011, Commissioner Michael Connor stated his staff was evaluating new criteria for allocating rural water project funding. He also stated that although these criteria were not finalized, the Bureau of Reclamation would use the new criteria to allocate the additional funding provided in the FY 2012 appropriation. These new criteria give consideration to the factors you identified in your letter, along with the factors referenced in the Conference Report and others. Further, the new criteria also consider the Department of the Interior's trust responsibility to Native Americans.

We also recognize your concern that without sufficient funding levels the Lewis and Clark project cannot be completed. Since this is a challenge for all rural water projects, it is paramount that we formulate budgets and allocate limited funding so that progress toward completion remains a high priority. In this manner, we can optimize our approach to complete all of the authorized rural water projects.

We have prepared a report for Congress that responded to the requirement in the Conference Report, with a full explanation of the criteria as described above. The Rural Water Program faces many challenges in the current budget environment. We believe the criteria applied to the additional funding addresses the factors included in the Conference Report while addressing critical needs and the ability to make progress towards the completion of meaningful phases of the authorized rural water projects.

We look forward to working with you as we continue to refine the criteria and complete construction of these important rural water projects.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar

Identical Letter Sent To:

Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Kristi Noem  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Johnson  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Steve King  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Al Franken  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Walz  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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FEB 10 2012

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United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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