

ORDER NO.

Subject: Department of the Interior WaterSMART Program – Sustain and Manage America’s Resources for Tomorrow

**Sec. 1 Purpose.** To secure and stretch water supplies for use by existing and future generations to benefit people, the economy, and the environment, and identify adaptive measures needed to address climate change and future demands. Through this Order, the Department of the Interior (DOI) will pursue a sustainable water supply for the Nation by establishing a framework to provide federal leadership and assistance on the efficient use of water, integrating water and energy policies to support the sustainable use of all natural resources, and coordinating the water conservation activities of the various Interior bureaus and offices. DOI’s efforts will contribute to the development of domestic expertise in water-related technologies and sustainable water management practices, thereby enhancing U.S. competitiveness in providing solutions to world-wide water issues in the 21st century.

**Sec. 2 Background.** Water is our most precious natural resource, and is increasingly stressed by the demands our society places on it. Adequate water supplies are an essential element in human survival, ecosystem health, energy production, and economic sustainability. Significant climate change-related impacts on water supplies are well documented in the scientific literature and scientists are forecasting changes in hydrologic cycles. DOI must address and plan for these cycles.

DOI is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in working toward the goal of sustainable water supplies. DOI is the largest wholesaler of water in the country, providing water for municipal, agricultural, and environmental purposes, and administering cost share programs for water efficiency, recycling, and reuse projects. It is the steward of more than one-fifth of our Nation’s lands, which include thousands of miles of streams and rivers and the headwaters of many major watersheds, and is charged with protection of those ecosystems, including fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitat. DOI holds millions of acres of Indian reservations and other lands, and associated water resources, in trust for the benefit of Indian tribes and individuals. It plays an important role in the development of both conventional and renewable energy, which can require substantial quantities of water. Finally, DOI monitors and assesses the Nation’s water resources and water use, and provides unbiased scientific information needed by water managers. Accordingly, DOI is exceptionally qualified to lead the way in pursuing water sustainability in the U.S. and has a responsibility to do so. The solutions employed in the U.S. will be applicable

elsewhere, providing opportunities to avoid projected water crises worldwide where water use in the past century has grown twice as fast as world population.

Aggressive action is required to address future water supply challenges, including degradation in water quality caused by pollution and land use practices, decreases in flow, declines in groundwater levels, and aging water infrastructure. Anticipated increases in population, development of tribal water rights, and renewed emphasis on domestic energy development will place additional demands on already stressed supplies. Ecosystems require adequate supplies of clean water and appropriate timing and volume of critical flows to survive and flourish, and recognition of the need for water to support environmental values is increasing over time.

Poor water quality and water shortages often impact low income communities, Native American communities and reservations, Insular Areas, and other disadvantaged sectors of the economy more intensely than other populations. Addressing water equity issues is one of the DOI's highest priorities.

**Sec. 3 Authority.** This Order is issued under the authority of Section 2 of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1950 (64 Stat. 1262), as amended; the SECURE Water Act (P.L. 111-11, Subtitle F, Sections 9501 – 9510); and Executive Order 13514 on Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance.

**Sec. 4 WaterSMART Program.** This Order establishes the DOI WaterSMART Program – Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow. Through this Program, DOI will provide leadership in identifying strategies to ensure that this generation and generations to come will have adequate supplies of clean water for drinking, economic activity, recreation, and ecosystem health. Each bureau and office will exercise its discretion within the scope of its mission to carry out the purpose of this Order to sustain and manage water resources.

a. Coordination. DOI will maximize the effectiveness of the water sustainability efforts and programs of DOI agencies, including the Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI, Basin Studies Programs, WaterSMART Grants, and the U.S. Geological Survey's WaterSMART Availability and Use Assessment program by coordinating among them and with ongoing water conservation and sustainability programs of other federal and state agencies.

(1) The DOI WaterSMART Program will coordinate with the Task Force on Energy and Climate Change to identify the water footprint of various energy technologies in order to ensure that this use of resources is considered as part of any decision process on the development of such technologies.

(2) The DOI WaterSMART Program will also work with the Energy and Climate Change Council, the DOI Climate Science Centers, and the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives to obtain the best available science on the impacts of climate change on water supplies and to ensure integration of sustainable water strategies within the field offices of the Department's bureaus and agencies.

(3) The DOI WaterSMART Program will coordinate with the relevant offices within the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget to develop a water footprint reduction program for facilities and water-consuming operations within the Department; provide input and information on water conservation methods and technology to bureaus and offices; and work together with the Senior Sustainability Officer (the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget) in order to achieve and exceed the Department’s water consumption goal set forth in Executive Order 13514.

b. WaterSMART Clearinghouse. This Order establishes the WaterSMART Clearinghouse as a public resource to provide leadership and assistance to state and local governments, tribal nations, and others in coordinating and integrating water conservation and sustainable water strategies. The Clearinghouse will convene interested governmental entities, water user and supplier organizations, conservation and scientific organizations, and others to identify best practices in water conservation, incentives, the most cost-effective technologies that stretch existing water supplies, and actions that integrate energy and water policies, including land use planning. Through the WaterSMART Clearinghouse, DOI will also facilitate access to and information sharing for conservation-related government grants, funding, and programs. The Clearinghouse will provide appropriate recognition and focus national attention on outstanding examples of water sustainability efforts. The WaterSMART Clearinghouse will assist the U.S. in securing its own water future while taking a leadership role in providing the technologies and management strategies that will be key to addressing global water issues in the 21st Century.

c. Integration of Energy and Water Policies: Water and energy are inextricably linked. Water shortages can affect energy production, energy development requires substantial quantities of water, and reduction in water demand can reduce the energy requirements for water distribution, to name just a few of the connections. The WaterSMART Program will ensure that DOI applies criteria that identify and support projects and actions that promote sustainable water strategies, and support development of incremental hydroelectric power generation.

d. Scientific Information to Support Sustainable Water Supplies. The DOI WaterSMART Program will adhere to the principle that one cannot adequately manage a resource that is not measured. As such, the Program will evaluate the information needed for sound decision-making on sustainable water and will determine whether there is adequate information about the availability, quality, and use of water across the Nation for this purpose. The Program will make recommendations for enhancements to information collection, analysis and delivery where needed.

**Sec. 5 WaterSMART Task Force.** A WaterSMART Task Force is established to implement the WaterSMART Program. The Task Force is chaired by the Assistant Secretary – Water and Science and includes the Assistant Secretaries, heads of bureaus, and the Solicitor, or their designees. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary serve as ex officio members of the Task Force. The Task Force may enlist the services of subject matter or scientific experts to inform its actions. The Task Force is responsible for:

a. Developing a strategy and implementing the DOI WaterSMART Program. The DOI WaterSMART Strategy will be documented in a written plan, which will be provided for public review and comment. Nothing in this Strategy is meant to, or in fact does, affect the substantive or legal rights of third parties or bind the Federal agencies.

b. Taking appropriate action to further the policies in this Order, including conducting education, awareness, and outreach activities.

c. Working within existing relationships and developing new partnerships with the States and Tribes to collaborate on implementation of the WaterSMART Strategy.

d. Evaluating and making recommendations for incorporating water conservation criteria and the water/energy nexus in the Department's planning efforts, including recommending measures to reduce conflict in water management.

—**Sec. 6 Implementation.** The Assistant Secretary – Water and Science is responsible for ensuring implementation of all aspects of this Order. This responsibility may be delegated, as appropriate. This Order does not alter or affect any existing duty or authority of individual bureaus.

**Sec. 7 Expiration Date.** This Order is effective immediately and will remain in effect until its provisions are converted to the Departmental Manual or until it is amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever occurs first.

Secretary of the Interior

Date: