

Updated April 2, 2025

Bureau of Reclamation: FY2025 Budget and Appropriations

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), part of the Department of the Interior, is primarily responsible for the construction and operation of hundreds of large dams and water diversion structures in the 17 western Reclamation States, as designated in statute (43 U.S.C. §391). Reclamation is the largest wholesale supplier of water in these 17 states and the second-largest hydroelectric power producer in the nation. Reclamation's mission areas and geographic scope are narrower than those of the other principal federal water resource agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Reclamation's Water and Related Resources account funds most agency activities, including construction, operations and maintenance, dam safety, and Indian water rights settlements, as well as the agency's programmatic and grant authorities (including those for water reuse and recycling, desalination, conservation and efficiency, and aquatic ecosystem restoration, among other purposes). Reclamation typically also receives funding for three smaller accounts: California Bay-Delta Restoration, the Central Valley Project Restoration Fund (which is offset by customer receipts), and Policy and Administration.

FY2025 Budget and Appropriations

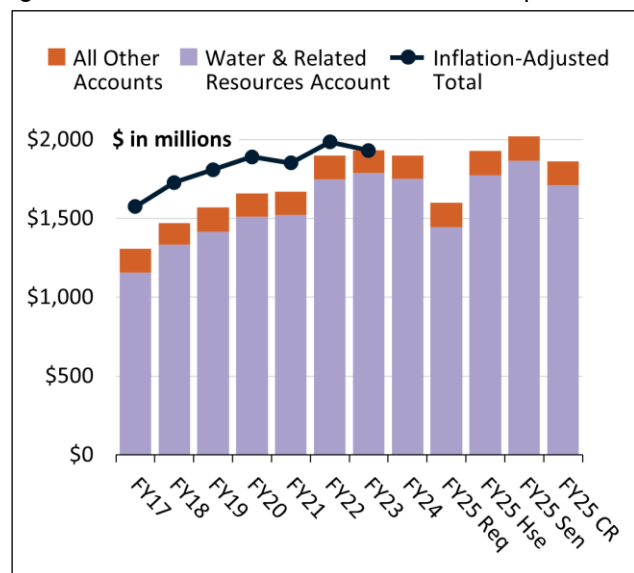
The Administration usually requests a lower amount for Reclamation than the final enacted total of annual appropriations. For FY2025, President Biden requested \$1.599 billion in current budget authority for Reclamation, or \$301 million less than the \$1.900 billion Congress provided in FY2024 under P.L. 118-42. In FY2025 appropriations, the House Appropriations Committee recommended \$1.929 billion for Reclamation in H.R. 8997, while the Senate Appropriations Committee recommended \$2.020 billion for the agency in S. 4927. In the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), also referred to as a continuing resolution (CR), Congress provided Reclamation with a total of \$1.860 billion in funding (**Figure 1**), which is the FY2024 enacted level minus specified reductions (see below section, "Additional Funding and "Earmarks"). This amount is greater than the FY2025 amount that had been proposed by the Biden Administration for Reclamation but less than House and Senate Committee-proposed levels.

In addition to regular annual appropriations, Congress has provided Reclamation with supplemental appropriations which were expected to augment discretionary funding by as much as \$2.500 billion in FY2025. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) included \$8.300 billion total, to be made available in equal installments from FY2022 to FY2026 (i.e., \$1.660 billion per year). P.L. 117-169 (popularly known as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, or IRA) provided Reclamation with \$4.590 billion in

funding, including \$4.000 billion for western drought mitigation, with priority given to actions in the Colorado River Basin. IRA funding is to remain available until FY2026 or FY2031, depending on the provision. Reclamation is allocating these funds on a rolling basis.

Figure 1. Reclamation Annual Appropriations, FY2015-FY2025

Figure is interactive in the HTML version of this report.



Source: CRS, based on FY2015-FY2025 appropriations and FY2025 budget request. Inflation adjustment to FY2023 dollars based on Office of Management and Budget (OMB) FY2025 Budget, Historical Table 10.1.

Note: Amounts do not reflect supplemental funding or offsetting receipts.

Additional Funding and "Earmarks"

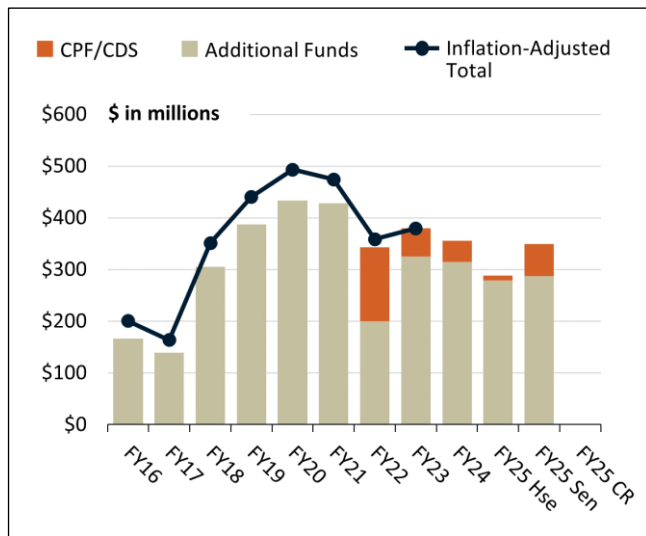
Reclamation's Water and Related Resources account consists largely of individual project funding lines. During the 112th-116th Congresses, Reclamation appropriations were subject to general *earmark moratoriums* that restricted Congress from funding geographically specific project line items not requested by the Administration. Instead, Congress included *Additional Funding* amounts for selected categories of Reclamation projects, typically in five categories: Rural Water, Water Conservation and Delivery, Environmental Restoration and Compliance, Fish Passage/Fish Screens, and Facilities Maintenance and Rehabilitation. The Administration allocated these funds for specific projects in spend plans made available several months after enactment of the appropriations bills.

In the 117th and 118th Congresses, appropriations recommendations included earmarks (now categorized as

community project funding [CPF] or congressionally directed spending [CDS] in the House and Senate, respectively). Congress has recommended funding CPF/CDS items in Reclamation's Water and Related Resources account, in addition to amounts designated as Additional Funding. For FY2025 appropriations, H.R. 8997 recommended \$279 million for Additional Funding and \$9 million in CPF, while S. 4927 recommended \$287 million in Additional Funding and \$63 million for CDS (**Figure 2**). P.L. 119-4 approved no new CPF/CDS projects for FY2025 and reduced Reclamation's total Water and Related Resources Account appropriation by \$41 million, or the FY2024 total for CPF/CDS projects.

Figure 2. Congressionally Added Funding in Reclamation Annual Appropriations, FY2015-FY2025

Figure is interactive in the HTML version of this report.



Source: CRS, based on FY2015-FY2024 appropriations. Inflation adjustment to FY2023 dollars based on OMB FY2025 Budget Historical Table IO.I.

Notes: CPF/CDS = community project funding/congressionally directed spending.

Reclamation Appropriations Issues

Allocation of Continuing Resolution Funds

Congress included no formal requirement for Reclamation to publicly report on its allocations of FY2025 enacted CR funding in a work plan or another document comparable to prior years. Rather, in Section 1113 of P.L. 119-4, Congress required the Department of the Interior (DOI) and other agencies to report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees on allocations of enacted CR funding at the Program, Project, and Activity levels or any greater level of detail that is comparable to FY2024 explanatory report

language. That is, DOI/Reclamation must report to congressional committees on final FY2025 project and program allocations under P.L. 119-4.

WIIN Act Section 4007 Funding

Section 4007 of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act; P.L. 114-322) authorized a process for Reclamation to study and construct federal and nonfederal water storage projects. For projects to receive funding under Section 4007, first Congress appropriates funds under this authority. Then, the Administration recommends specific projects to fund using those appropriations. Congress then decides whether to approve these recommendations in enacted appropriations legislation.

From FY2017 through FY2024, Congress provided approximately \$988 million in regular appropriations for these projects. Congress has approved Administration recommendations for 13 projects in California, Washington, and Idaho totaling \$609 million. In FY2025 appropriations, the House proposed \$134 million for these projects, while the Senate did not specify funding levels. P.L. 119-4 approved prior-year (i.e., FY2023 and FY2024) funding allocations for several WIIN Act projects that were previously recommended by the Biden Administration in FY2024.

Additional Reading

- CRS In Focus IF12369, *Bureau of Reclamation: FY2024 Budget and Appropriations*, by Charles V. Stern
- CRS Report R47032, *Bureau of Reclamation Provisions in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58)*, by Charles V. Stern and Anna E. Normand
- CRS In Focus IF12437, *Bureau of Reclamation Funding in the Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169)*, by Charles V. Stern and Anna E. Normand
- CRS In Focus IF12414, *Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Program*, by Charles V. Stern and Anna E. Normand
- CRS Report R47987, *Bureau of Reclamation Support for Water Storage Projects*, by Charles V. Stern
- CRS Report R44148, *Indian Water Rights Settlements*, by Charles V. Stern and Mariel J. Murray

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