

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 20, 2015

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

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

Dear Director Donovan and Secretary Jewell:

As you finalize the administration budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2016, we write once again to highlight the importance of funding for ongoing rural water projects and specifically the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System.

As you know, Lewis & Clark is one of six ongoing rural water projects at the Bureau of Reclamation. Lewis & Clark was authorized in 2000 (P.L. 106-246) and is currently 65 percent complete. Once finished, this project will serve roughly 300,000 people in 20 communities across South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa.


Over the last fifteen years, the federal government has committed \$222.5 million to the Lewis & Clark system. The federal funding to date has amounted to a little more than 50 percent of the projects federal cost share. Unfortunately, in the last several years, federal funding for this project has not kept pace with inflationary increases, and pipeline construction has languished.

Conversely, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa have prepaid 100 percent of their cost share of \$154 million. Additionally, this last year, both South Dakota and Minnesota took measures to move this project forward by allocating additional state resources to Lewis & Clark as an advance on future federal funds. As a result, the project was able to award contracts for 18 miles of pipeline construction, which will bring an additional two communities into the system. While it is unfortunate that the federal government has not met its commitment to this project in a timely way, we appreciate the states' actions to advance the completion of this project.

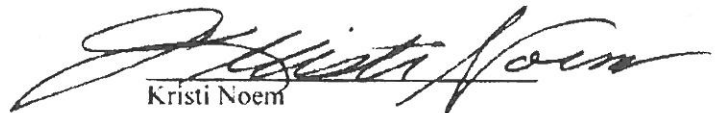
Additional funding for rural water projects like Lewis & Clark builds upon the significant previous federal investment in infrastructure that has been made. Ultimately, timely completion of this project will save taxpayer dollars. We hope that your FY 2016 budget request will reflect a desire on the part of the administration to meet the long overdue federal commitment to the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System and best serve the interests of taxpayers.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



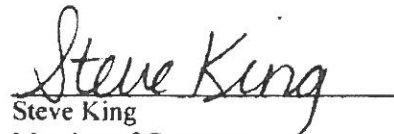
John Thune
United States Senator



Kristi Noem
Member of Congress



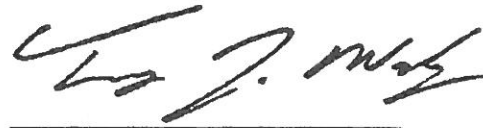
Charles Grassley
United States Senator



Steve King
Member of Congress



Al Franken
United States Senator



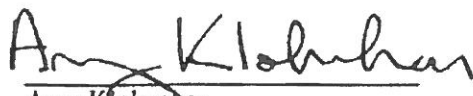
Tim Walz
Member of Congress



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator