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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To provide for a national water data framework, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. STANSBURY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To provide for a national water data framework, and for
other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Water Data Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

6 In this Act:

7 (1) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—The term “Advi-
8 sory Committee” means the Advisory Committee on
9 Water Information established by section 5(a).

1 (2) COUNCIL.—The term “Council” means the
2 Water Data Council established under section 4(a).

3 (3) DATA STANDARDS.—The term “data stand-
4 ards” means standards relating to the manner in
5 which data are to be structured, populated, and en-
6 coded in machine-readable formats, and made inter-
7 operable for data exchange.

8 (4) DEPARTMENTS.—The term “Departments”
9 means each of the following:

10 (A) The Department of Agriculture.

11 (B) The Department of Commerce.

12 (C) The Department of Defense.

13 (D) The Department of Energy.

14 (E) The Department of Health and
15 Human Services.

16 (F) The Department of Homeland Secu-
17 rity.

18 (G) The Department of the Interior.

19 (H) The Environmental Protection Agency.

20 (I) The National Aeronautics and Space
21 Administration.

22 (5) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
23 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
24 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
25 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

1 (6) NATIONAL WATER DATA FRAMEWORK.—

2 The term “National Water Data Framework” means
3 the national water data framework developed under
4 section 3.

5 (7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
6 the Secretary of the Interior.

7 (8) WATER DATA.—The term “water data”
8 means measurements of basic properties relating to
9 the planning and management of water resources,
10 including streamflow, precipitation, groundwater,
11 soil moisture, snow, evaporation, water quality, and
12 water use in agriculture, industry, natural systems,
13 and municipal uses.

14 (9) WATER DATA GRANT PROGRAM.—The term
15 “Water Data Grant Program” means the water data
16 grant program established under section 6(a).

17 (10) WATER DATA INFRASTRUCTURE.—The
18 term “water data infrastructure” means an inte-
19 grated system of information technologies that in-
20 cludes common standards, formats, and tools to
21 make water data easy to find, access, and share on-
22 line.

23 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL WATER DATA FRAMEWORK.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of improving
25 water resources management and access across the United

1 States, including addressing drought, floods, and other
2 water management challenges, the heads of the Depart-
3 ments shall jointly develop and implement a national water
4 data framework for integrating, sharing, and using water
5 data.

6 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—In developing and imple-
7 menting the National Water Data Framework, the De-
8 partments shall—

9 (1) identify and prioritize key water data need-
10 ed to support water resources management and
11 planning, including—

12 (A) water data sets, types, and associated
13 metadata; and

14 (B) water data infrastructure, tech-
15 nologies, and tools;

16 (2) develop and adopt common national water
17 data standards for collecting, sharing, and inte-
18 grating water data, infrastructure, technologies, and
19 tools in consultation with States, Indian Tribes, local
20 governments, and relevant bodies;

21 (3) ensure that Federal water data are made
22 findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable in
23 accordance with the standards developed and adopt-
24 ed pursuant to this Act;

1 (4) integrate water data and tools through com-
2 mon approaches to data infrastructure, platforms,
3 models, and tool development;

4 (5) establish a common, national geospatial
5 index for publishing and linking water data from
6 Federal, State, Tribal, and other non-Federal
7 sources for online discovery;

8 (6) harmonize and align policies, programs, pro-
9 tocols, budgets, and funding programs relating to
10 water data to achieve the purposes of this Act to the
11 maximum extent practicable;

12 (7) participate in and coordinate water data ac-
13 tivities with the Council; and

14 (8) support the adoption of new technologies
15 and the development of tools for water data collec-
16 tion, sharing, and standardization by Federal, State,
17 Tribal, local, and other entities.

18 **SEC. 4. WATER DATA COUNCIL.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The heads of the Departments
20 shall establish an interagency Council, to be known as the
21 “Water Data Council”, to support the development and
22 implementation of the National Water Data Framework.

23 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

24 (1) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—The Secretary
25 shall—

1 (A) serve as the Chair of the Council;

2 (B) in collaboration with the Office of
3 Science and Technology Policy, convene the
4 Council not less frequently than 4 times each
5 year; and

6 (C) provide staff support for the Council
7 through the United States Geological Survey.

8 (2) MEMBERS.—Council Members shall include
9 the heads of the following entities:

10 (A) The Departments.

11 (B) Bureaus and offices of the Depart-
12 ments that have a significant role or interest in
13 water data, including—

14 (i) the Corps of Engineers;

15 (ii) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

16 (iii) the Bureau of Reclamation;

17 (iv) the Federal Emergency Manage-
18 ment Agency;

19 (v) the Federal Energy Regulatory
20 Commission;

21 (vi) the United States Fish and Wild-
22 life Service;

23 (vii) the Indian Health Service;

24 (viii) the Forest Service;

25 (ix) the National Laboratories;

1 (x) the Natural Resources Conserva-
2 tion Service;

3 (xi) the National Oceanic and Atmos-
4 pheric Administration;

5 (xii) the Rural Development program
6 of the Department of Agriculture; and

7 (xiii) the United States Geological
8 Survey.

9 (C) Offices of the Executive Office of the
10 President, including—

11 (i) the Council on Environmental
12 Quality;

13 (ii) the Office of Management and
14 Budget; and

15 (iii) the Office of Science and Tech-
16 nology Policy.

17 (D) Other Federal entities that the Chair
18 and a majority of the members of the Council
19 described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) de-
20 termine to be appropriate.

21 (c) DUTIES.—The Council shall—

22 (1) support the development and implementa-
23 tion of the National Water Data Framework; and

24 (2) facilitate communication and collaboration
25 among members of the Council—

1 (A) to establish, adopt, and implement
2 common national water data standards;

3 (B) to promote water data sharing and in-
4 tegration across Federal departments and agen-
5 cies, including—

6 (i) water data collection, documenta-
7 tion, maintenance, distribution, and preser-
8 vation strategies; and

9 (ii) development and use of water data
10 infrastructure, tools, and technologies to
11 support water management and planning;

12 (C) to align the policies, programs, proto-
13 cols, budgets, and funding programs relating to
14 water data of the members of the Council; and

15 (D) to promote partnerships across Fed-
16 eral entities and non-Federal entities—

17 (i) to advance innovation and solu-
18 tions in water data, technology, tools, plan-
19 ning, and management; and

20 (ii) to develop guidelines for data
21 sharing and protecting data privacy.

22 (d) WATER DATA COUNCIL REPORTS.—Not later
23 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act,
24 and annually thereafter, in conjunction with the annual
25 budget submission of the President to Congress under sec-

tion 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary, acting on behalf of the Council, shall submit to members of the Council and the appropriate committees of Congress and make available publicly online a report that describes—

(1) the National Water Data Framework;

(2) the actions undertaken by the Departments to implement this Act pursuant to section 3;

(3) key water data sets, types, and infrastructure needed to support water management and planning;

(4) goals, targets, and actions to carry out the National Water Data Framework in the subsequent fiscal year;

(5) a summary and evaluation of the progress of the Departments in achieving any prior goals, targets, and actions to carry out the National Water Data Framework;

(6) actions needed to align policies, programs, and budgetary resources to carry out the National Water Data Framework in the subsequent fiscal year;

(7) grants and assistance provided to State, Tribal, and local entities toward the development and adoption of new technologies and tools;

1 (8) opportunities to develop and incentivize the
2 deployment of promising next-generation tech-
3 nologies, including new water data technologies and
4 tools, in partnership with the private sector and oth-
5 ers to accomplish the purposes of this Act; and

6 (9) metrics for achieving the National Water
7 Data Framework.

8 **SEC. 5. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WATER INFORMATION.**

9 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within
10 the Department of the Interior an advisory committee, to
11 be known as the “Advisory Committee on Water Informa-
12 tion”, to advise the Secretary, Departments, and Council
13 on the development and implementation of the National
14 Water Data Framework.

15 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

16 (1) COMPOSITION.—The Advisory Committee
17 shall be composed of members, to be appointed by
18 the Secretary in a manner that provides for—

19 (A) balanced representation among various
20 entities involved in water-related activities; and

21 (B) consideration for a geographic balance
22 of individuals representing localities across the
23 United States.

24 (2) SELECTION.—Members of the Advisory
25 Committee shall be selected by the Secretary from

1 among entities involved in water-related activities,
2 including—

3 (A) States;

4 (B) Indian Tribes;

5 (C) local governments;

6 (D) Federal entities;

7 (E) water agencies, utilities, conservation
8 districts, irrigation districts, acequias, and
9 other water user associations;

10 (F) organizations that facilitate collabora-
11 tion across States and multi-state instrumental-
12 ities;

13 (G) educational institutions;

14 (H) professional organizations;

15 (I) water data and technology-related ex-
16 perts, professionals, and industries;

17 (J) private sector entities; and

18 (K) nonprofit organizations.

19 (3) TERM.—Members of the Advisory Com-
20 mittee shall be appointed by the Secretary for a
21 term not to exceed 4 years.

22 (c) CHAIR.—The Secretary shall serve as the Chair
23 of the Advisory Committee.

1 (d) STAFF SUPPORT.—The United States Geological
2 Survey shall provide support services for the Advisory
3 Committee.

4 (e) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Committee shall meet
5 at the call of the Chair, but not less frequently than 4
6 times each year.

7 (f) DUTIES.—The duties of the Advisory Committee
8 are to advise the Secretary, Departments, and Council
9 on—

10 (1) the development and implementation of the
11 National Water Data Framework;

12 (2) efforts to operate a cost-effective national
13 network of water data collection and analysis that
14 meets the priority water information needs of the
15 Federal Government and, to the extent practicable
16 using available resources, the needs of the non-Fed-
17 eral community that are tied to national interests;

18 (3) efforts to develop uniform standards, guide-
19 lines, and procedures for the collection, analysis,
20 management, and dissemination of water informa-
21 tion to improve quality, consistency, and accessibility
22 nationwide; and

23 (4) the effectiveness of existing water informa-
24 tion programs and recommended modifications need-

1 ed to respond to changes in legislation, technology,
2 and other conditions.

3 (g) APPLICABILITY OF FACA.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
5 graph (2), the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5
6 U.S.C. App.) shall apply to the Advisory Committee.

7 (2) NO TERMINATION.—Section 14(a)(2) of the
8 Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.)
9 shall not apply to the Advisory Committee.

10 **SEC. 6. WATER DATA GRANT PROGRAM.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a
12 water data grant program under which the Secretary shall
13 award grants—

14 (1) to support non-Federal entities in making
15 water data sets findable, accessible, interoperable,
16 and reusable in accordance with the water data
17 standards established under this Act;

18 (2) to advance the development of water data
19 infrastructure, tools, and technologies to facilitate
20 the sharing and use of water data;

21 (3) to support programs and projects that fa-
22 cilitate water data sharing and use in water re-
23 sources management and the implementation of the
24 National Water Data Framework; and

1 (4) to provide a prize for accelerating innova-
2 tion and developing next-generation water data tools
3 and technologies.

4 (b) COORDINATION WITH THE COUNCIL.—The Sec-
5 retary shall consult and coordinate with the Council in cre-
6 ating and implementing the Water Data Grant Program
7 to ensure that—

8 (1) the Water Data Grant Program is aligned
9 with and carries out the purposes of this Act; and

10 (2) grants and programs are harmonized across
11 the Departments and members of the Council to
12 achieve the purposes of this Act.

13 (c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity eligible for a
14 grant under the Water Data Grant Program—

15 (1) shall demonstrate significant needs or capa-
16 bilities for advancing water data sharing and tools
17 with a significant public benefit; and

18 (2) may include—

19 (A) a State, multistate instrumentality, In-
20 dian Tribe, or other unit of local government;

21 (B) a water agency, utility, conservation
22 district, irrigation district, acequia, mutual do-
23 mestic association, or other entity organized
24 pursuant to Federal, Tribal, or local laws for
25 the purpose of water-related activities;

1 (C) an educational institution or nonprofit
2 organization; and

3 (D) in the case of carrying out activities
4 described in subsection (a)(4)—

5 (i) an individual who is a citizen or
6 legal resident of the United States; or

7 (ii) an entity that is incorporated and
8 maintains the primary place of business of
9 the entity in the United States.

10 (d) REQUIREMENTS.—

11 (1) DATA SHARING AND STANDARDS.—Any
12 project funded through the Water Data Grant Pro-
13 gram shall be implemented in accordance with the
14 water data standards established under section 3.

15 (2) USE OF EXISTING WATER DATA INFRA-
16 STRUCTURE.—The recipient of a grant shall, to the
17 extent practicable, leverage existing water data and
18 water data infrastructure.

19 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
20 of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, in con-
21 junction with the annual budget submission of the Presi-
22 dent to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United
23 States Code, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a re-
24 port that describes the implementation of the Water Data
25 Grant Program, including—

1 (1) a description of the use and deployment of
2 amounts made available under the Water Data
3 Grant Program;

4 (2) an accounting of all grants awarded under
5 the Water Data Grant Program, including a descrip-
6 tion of—

7 (A) each grant recipient; and

8 (B) each project funded under the Water
9 Data Grant Program;

10 (3) an assessment of the success of the Water
11 Data Grant Program in advancing the purposes of
12 this Act; and

13 (4) a plan for the subsequent fiscal year to
14 achieve the purposes of this Act.

15 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
16 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
17 out the Water Data Grant Program \$25,000,000 for each
18 of fiscal years 2023 through 2027, to remain available
19 until expended.

20 (g) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Of the funds author-
21 ized to be appropriated under subsection (f), not more
22 than 3 percent may be used by the Secretary for adminis-
23 trative costs.

1 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
3 retary to carry out sections 3 through 5 \$15,000,000 for
4 each of fiscal years 2023 through 2027, to remain avail-
5 able until expended.