



► WATER & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Despite record-breaking amounts of rain and snow in the West, water remains a critical concern for farmers, communities, utilities and water districts across our region. Some of the top concerns and interests are:

- The proposed revised Waters of the United States (WOTUS) definition recently published and out for public comment. It is the intent of the new definition to provide clarity and guidance as to which waters meet the definition of WOTUS and therefore fall within the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. *A link to provide comment on the proposed revised WOTUS definition appears in this edition of the Regional Round Up.*
- The years of drought in the Western states has led to unprecedented amounts of groundwater pumping to replace diminished reservoir water supplies. This has led to growing concern regarding groundwater quality and quantities. More attention is now focused on how groundwater is recharged, groundwater sustainability, as well as how to protect natural springs originating from ground water aquifers and the habits they support.
- Drought Contingency Plans (DCP) to protect the Colorado River. These plans are still in the approval process as a couple of states missed a deadline set by the Interior Department. Approval process is continuing in the absence of a key California water rights holder, the Imperial Irrigation District (IID). The IID is seeking a \$200 million commitment from the federal government to address the Salton Sea, which is suffering from drought conditions and pollution in exchange for its signing onto the DCP.
- Access to clean drinking water remains out of reach for many communities in rural areas. Efforts to address the lack of potable water in many rural towns include new tax proposals to improve and, in some instances, create water



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infrastructure to distribute clean water, as well as new technologies to test and monitor water quality for public and private groundwater wells and reservoir flows.

The [CSG West Water & Environment Committee](#) is focused on water issues, such as wetlands restoration, and will convene a session to discuss and share information about the water challenges faced by western legislatures and the constituencies they represent at the Annual Meeting in Big Sky, Montana.

Stay tuned...for an introduction the [CSG West Health Committee](#).