Farmer Lobbyists Advocate for Western Irrigated Ag in D.C.

A group of farmers, ranchers and water managers from five Western states made the rounds on Capitol Hill and met with key Trump Administration officials earlier this month as part of the 2019 Family Farm Alliance Farmer Lobbyist trip.

“The Alliance annual farmer lobbyist trip is one of the cornerstone programs of our organization,” said Alliance President Patrick O’Toole, a cattle and sheep farmer from Wyoming. “It was created to allow farmers, ranchers and water managers to interact directly with elected officials and other policy in Washington, D.C.”

This year’s farmer lobbyist contingent included representatives from Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. In addition to meeting with Congressional Members from those states, the group also met with senior officials from the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, and staffers from key Congressional water committees.

The Western contingent visited twenty offices in the course of 2-1/2 days.

Congressional Meetings

Meetings on Capitol Hill primarily focused on several water infrastructure bills that have been introduced in the House and Senate, as well as Endangered Species Act (ESA) issues. Staff from the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works, and House Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee met with the Alliance contingent on those matters. Farmer Lobbyists were also able to meet directly with Members of Congress from their respective states, including Senator John Barrasso (R-WYOMING), Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OREGON), Senator Martha McSally (R-ARIZONA), Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NEVADA), Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WASHINGTON), and Rep. Kim Schrier (D-WASHINGTON).

Senator McSally was especially upbeat as her S. 2044 – The Water Supply Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Utilization Act - was successfully marked up and passed by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Wade Noble, Coordinator for the Yuma County Agriculture Water Coalition (ARIZONA), last summer
2019 Farmer Lobbyists (Continued from Page 1)

tested on behalf of the Alliance in support of that bill. S. 2044 gives local operators of federally owned facilities the tools they need to maintain and improve aging water infrastructure in a timely manner.

Meetings were also held with staffers from the offices of Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WASHINGTON), Senator Patty Murray (D-WASHINGTON) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OREGON).

Implementation of the farm bill passed last December was also a key topic of discussion raised in meetings with senior Department of Agriculture officials and staffers from the House Agriculture Committee. Insufficient staffing issues are hindering full implementation of some Farm Bill conservation programs. However, the Natural Resources Conservation Service will soon release interim final rules, followed by final rules, for all Farm Bill Conservation title programs.

“We learned from NRCS that draft implementation rules associated with several farm bill conservation programs are close to being wrapped up, and should be available for public review and comment in the next month,” said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen.

Forest health and measures used to speed up active forest management in the West were also discussed in the meetings with USDA officials.

Meeting with Environmental Protection Agency

The group had a very productive meeting with a large group of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leaders from the Office of Water to discuss the encouraging progress made on the Trump Administration’s 2-step process to rescind and replace the 2015 Clean Water Rule. The draft proposed replacement rule has been favorably received by the Alliance and many of its members.

Much of the dialogue with EPA centered around water quality trading concepts that EPA is developing. The EPA officials explained the agency strongly supports market-based mechanisms to accomplish its mission to protect human health and the environment. Market-based mechanisms include water quality trading, an approach that promotes water quality improvements at lower cost than more traditional regulatory approaches. EPA has long interpreted the Clean Water Act to allow pollutant reductions from water quality trading and offsets to achieve compliance with CWA regulatory requirements. Neither the CWA nor the EPA’s implementing regulations explicitly address water quality trading. In the absence of explicit statutory language or regulations, the EPA has provided guidance for permitting authorities and stakeholders to consider when developing market-based programs, including water quality trading.

EPA is requesting comment on policy approaches for addressing “baseline” issues in watersheds with EPA-approved Total Maximum Daily Loads where policy makers would like to pursue water quality trading as a regulatory option for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit compliance.

“These policy approaches may also be of interest to stakeholders pursuing market-based water quality improvement programs outside of the NPDES permit program,” said Mark Limbaugh, the Alliance’s representative in Washington, D.C.

“We’ll be encouraging our members to share their ideas that we can incorporate into a comment letter for EPA to consider,” added Mr. Keppen.

Comments must be received on or before November 18, 2019. A combined in-person and online listening session will be held at EPA Headquarters in Washington, DC on October 21, 2019, from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. EDT.

Meeting with DOI and Reclamation Senior Officials

The 2019 farmer lobbyists met with Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tim Petty and his assistant, Aubrey Bettencourt; Deputy Interior Secretary Kiel Weaver; and Associate Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation Mat Maucieri to discuss progress made this year on facilitating title transfers and addressing concerns with transferred works.

Reclamation is continuing stakeholder outreach on a draft Directive and Standard on Substantial Changes on Transferred Works (CMP 10-05) and is inviting additional feedback from partners and stakeholders, including the Alliance. They have scheduled a conference call on Friday, October 4, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. MDT, where Reclamation leadership and policy personnel will provide an update on proposed revisions to the draft D&S first circulated in 2018 and revised this year. Those changes are based on previous stakeholder feedback to streamline internal requirements to better focus on Reclamation’s stewardship commitments and stakeholder partnerships. The conference call will include a briefing on the proposed draft, description of a plan to re-open the comment period for an additional 30 days, time to answer questions, and opportunity for participants to provide feedback.

“The leadership of Interior and Reclamation in this Administration have been incredibly responsive to our concerns on an earlier draft version of the D&S, as well as other important issues raised by Western irrigators,” said Mr. Keppen.

ESA Developments in Washington, D.C. and Beyond

The group also attended the September 24 roll out of the Congressional Western Caucus of its Endangered Species Act (ESA) modernization legislative package, a press event that was staged in the U.S. Senate Visitors Center Room. A similar package introduced last Congress received the endorsement of 170+ organizations throughout the country. Twelve Western Caucus Members – including Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar (R-ARIZONA) - Karen Budd-Falen from

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the Department of the Interior and industry stakeholders discussed the ESA generally and recent ESA regulations implemented by the Department of the Interior.

Mr. O’Toole, Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen, Urban Eberhart, general manager of the Kittitas Reclamation District (WASHINGTON) and Arizona Agri-Business and Water Council executive director Chris Udall also provided brief statements at the event. Each of the speakers shared personal stories and examples that illustrated the need to modernize the ESA.

Mr. Eberhart, a member of the Family Farm Alliance Advisory Committee, discussed his involvement with the Yakima Integrated Plan. “The Integrated Plan leverages federal, state, and local partnerships and funding to accomplish what one single stakeholder could not,” said Mr. Eberhart. “While these collaborations may be rare, especially in areas where the ESA has been used to limit or stop irrigation of farms and ranches, we have seen success. I believe that any improvements to the ESA can enable and promote partnerships like the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan in implementing ESA protections and recover endangered fisheries while protecting our agricultural heritage and economy.”

Another Alliance Advisory Committee Member, Mr. Udall, discussed his family’s experience in east-central Arizona, ranching on a cow-calf and yearling operation. The ranch was in the Udall family for decades, since the late 1800s. The Udall family ended up selling its federal forest permit and state trust lease in 2006 because of the Mexican Gray Wolf reintroduction and fear of lawsuits by environmental interests.

“In this instance, it was not science that prevailed nor the best ocular assessment of the range by the rancher or range conservationist,” said Mr. Udall. “Had science prevailed, we would have continued with the original carrying capacity of livestock. Fear of litigation prevailed.”

Mr. Udall believes the regulations written to implement the law should follow the intent of the law and should be subject to reauthorization, amending or repeal like other federal laws.

“It’s time to bring the ESA into the 21st century,” he said.

At the same time the Western Caucus was hosting its event, Democrats on the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife (WOW) conducted a hearing on several bills, including legislation (H.R. 4348) that would repeal three Trump Administration final rule changes to the ESA. Bill sponsors and several litigious environmental groups claim the Trump rules would fundamentally change the way the federal government protects threatened and endangered species.

“In the face of an extinction crisis, the Trump administration is shredding protections and shoving vulnerable wildlife closer to the cliff,” said Marjorie Mulhall, a legislative director for Earthjustice. “Today, leaders in the House of Representatives have introduced a bill that rejects those destructive actions and protects the Endangered Species Act, the last safety net for many imperiled species.”

A parallel assault on the Trump ESA proposal was also launched in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California by California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. Mr. Becerra led a coalition of attorneys general from 18 states and the City of New York who filed the lawsuit challenging the Trump Administration’s regulations. The suit claims that the proposed rules undermine the key requirements and purpose of the ESA in violation of the law.

“The only thing we want to see extinct are the beastly policies of the Trump Administration putting our ecosystems in critical danger,” said Attorney General Becerra.

The Family Farm Alliance and many other agricultural organizations, developers, recreation groups and local elected officials have expressed support for the proposed regulations, which were developed jointly by U.S. Fish and Wild-

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Alliance President Testifies Before the Senate on 2020 WRDA

Family Farm Alliance President Patrick O’Toole earlier this month presented recommendations to the Senate Committee charged with crafting the next Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Mr. O’Toole was joined by two other witnesses who all testified before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works at a hearing entitled, “Improving American Economic Competitiveness through Water Resources Infrastructure.”

“Extreme hydrologic events- marked by drought on one end, and floods on the other – will require everyone in the West to adopt a new paradigm, one that truly promotes wise management of this limited and valuable resource,” said Mr. O’Toole, a cattle and sheep rancher from Wyoming. “This new paradigm will also mean additional investment in technology, conservation and new water storage and management infrastructure in order to deal with the uncertainties that lay before us.”

Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-WYOMING) introduced Mr. O’Toole to the committee prior to his testimony.

“I would like to take a moment to introduce a very special friend and a longtime friend, Pat O’Toole. I’ve had the pleasure of knowing Pat for many years now,” said Chairman Barrasso. “He and his family are sheep and cattle ranchers in southern Wyoming along the Little Snake River. Pat has served as the president of the Family Farm Alliance, an organization dedicated to advocating for farmers, ranchers, and irrigation districts in Western states, since 2005.”

WRDA is a biennial piece of legislation that is the main vehicle for authorizing water projects to be studied, planned and developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). It is also the legislative vehicle for implementing policy changes with respect to the Corps’ water resource projects and programs. As such, this legislation is very important to the rural communities of the Western United States.

“We appreciate this opportunity to discuss conceptual ideas for the 2020 WRDA,” said Mr. O’Toole. “We’ve developed a wish list which assumes that the Senate WRDA under consideration will not necessarily be a Corps-centric bill, but could provide a vehicle to address other national and Western water resources challenges, as well.”

Recent WRDA bills — including the Water Infrastructure Improvements for our Nation (or WIIN) Act of 2016 and America’s Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 — both included water titles that included non-Corps programs that benefited Western rural communities.

“We believe a Western water title of the bill could provide a vehicle for several other water bills currently being considered in Congress,” said Mr. O’Toole.

Mr. O’Toole’s testimony concluded by stating the importance of addressing unique challenges faced by rural communities.

“The public infrastructure challenges our Nation is currently facing are daunting, and they will require innovative solutions,” said Mr. O’Toole. “Resilience will define success in the world of water policy. The future of how we utilize our water resources depends on funding options that help local communities have a flexible set of options.”

Joining Mr. O’Toole on the witness dais were Jamey Sanders (Vice-President of Choctaw Transportation Company) and Derek Brockbank (Executive Director, American Shore and Beach Preservation Association).

Senate Committee Holds Confirmation Hearing for FWS Director Nominee

Senators earlier this month considered the nomination of Ms. Aurelia Skipwith to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at the Department of the Interior. Ms. Skipwith appeared before the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee on September 11. If confirmed, she would be the first African American to head the agency.

"I am committed to leading the agency with the highest ethical standards and to ensuring that professional ethics are maintained throughout the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," Ms. Skipwith said at the hearing.

This will be her second try for the position, which has been vacant throughout the Trump Administration. Her nomination late in the previous Congress died without the Senate acting. Ms. Skipwith has been serving as the Interior Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

"More than 80 groups and individuals have written in support of Ms. Skipwith's nomination," noted Sen. John Barrasso (R-WYOMING), the chairman of the Senate EPW Committee.

The Family Farm Alliance earlier this month transmitted a letter of support for Ms. Skipwith to the EPW Committee.

"We believe Ms. Skipwith will bring a level of practical experience and intelligence, an understanding of the issues affecting Western farmers and ranchers, and a long-term vision for the future of the West to this important position," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. "She has our complete support for this position."
Trump Administration Repeals Obama-era WOTUS Rule

To howls of protest and dire warnings of environmental catastrophe, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) earlier this month finalized their repeal of the 2015 Obama-era Clean Water Rule. This effort seeks to clarify which wetlands and streams were protected as "waters of the U.S.,” or WOTUS, under the Clean Water Act (CWA). While the State of California and other critics of the move are taking actions to prevent that from occurring, farming interests generally support the move.

"Repealing the WOTUS rule is a major win for American agriculture,” said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue in a statement. "The extreme overreach from the past Administration had government taking the productivity of the land people had worked for years.”

The 2015 rule sought to clarify which wetlands and streams were protected as "waters of the U.S.,” or WOTUS, under the CWA. The repeal is the first of two steps planned by the administration. It remedies the legal and procedural deficiencies of the 2015 Rule, addresses the extensive litigation surrounding it, and recodifies and restores a regulatory process that has been in place for years.

The 2015 rule is currently blocked in 27 states and in effect in 22 others (the status of the rule in New Mexico is unclear). The repeal brings all 50 states back under regulations that have been in place since the 1980s, as interpreted by guidance written by the George W. Bush administration in 2008. The repeal is the first of two steps planning by the administration.

“The next step will be to rewrite the rule to provide regulatory certainty to our nation's farmers and businesses as to the definition of WOTUS,” the White House said in a statement.

Irrigation ditches typically are constructed in upland areas, but frequently must connect to a “WOTUS” to either capture or return flow. Congress in the CWA deliberately exempted both the construction and maintenance of such facilities, and excluded agricultural stormwater discharges and irrigation return flows from the definition of “point source”. That latter term applies to factory and sewer treatment discharges.

“The 2015 final rule itself was not crystal clear in excluding the West’s important irrigation infrastructure from CWA jurisdiction,” said Norm Semanko (IDAHO), general counsel to the Alliance. “Because the 2015 rule did not include explicit exemptions for these irrigation features, irrigators feared that litigious activists would inevitably claim that those features were subject to CWA jurisdiction.”

At a minimum, this could spawn years of delays (CWA permits can take a decade to secure) and lead to protracted and costly litigation. This in turn would create enormous uncertainty and potentially cripple Western agriculture, which obviously needs a reliable water supply.

“The proposed Trump rule, thankfully, returns irrigation and non-tidal drainage ditches to their historically - exempt status,” said Alliance executive director Dan Keppen.

Critics of the Trump Administration move were quick to call it a “roll back” – an “assault” on the CWA – and worked with urban media outlets to broadcast that message.

“One not familiar with this nation’s regime for regulation of the environment might understandably conclude that the Trump Administration’s new proposal will allow unchecked pollution in our nation’s waters,” said Mr. Keppen. “In fact, the CWA has long been widely recognized as an extremely successful statutory regime. And much of this progress was achieved under the CWA rules that were in place prior to the Obama Administration’s 2015 Rule.”

The result is a rule which establishes a regulatory structure that moves importantly in the direction of bringing clarity to CWA regulation. It does so by establishing what categories meet the definition under WOTUS. Just as importantly, it explains which categories do not.

Even before the announcement, environmental groups and their supporters vowed to challenge the rollback. California State Attorney General Xavier Becerra is already threatening legal action against the Trump administration, according to the San Francisco Chronicle.

“Our oceans, lakes, and rivers are all connected — when pollution impacts one source, it impacts them all and affects our communities,” Becerra said in a statement earlier this month. “While we don’t go looking for a fight, there’s too much at stake for us to let this go.”

Meanwhile, California Governor Gavin Newsom (D) earlier this month vowed to veto a state bill that would have negated many of the President’s proposed regulations. Water-related provisions of the bill proved problematic for farmers, ranchers and water agencies. For example, SB 1 would apply the California Endangered Species Act to the federally operated Central Valley Project. That provision threatened negotiations to establish voluntary agreements concerning water flows from the Sacramento and San Joaquin river watersheds into the California’s Bay-Delta.

Governor Newsom announced his opposition to Senate Bill 1 several hours after California lawmakers approved it.

“ACWA applauds Governor Newsom for recognizing that SB 1 would have derailed the ongoing Voluntary Agreement negotiations and led to unnecessary regulatory uncertainty for water agencies throughout California,” said Brent Hastey, President of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA). “His commitment to the collaborative Voluntary Agreement process reflects a belief in California and the people who are working hard, and working together, to truly benefit our communities, our economy and the environment.”
Maui County Council Votes to Settle High Profile CWA Case

The Maui County Council voted 5-4 earlier this month to approve a resolution supporting a settlement of a high-profile Clean Water Act (CWA) case with implications for American farmers and ranchers. The decision could prevent the conservative-leaning U.S. Supreme Court to determine whether pollution that travels through groundwater on the way to federally regulated waters triggers CWA permitting requirements.

The U.S. Supreme Court was scheduled to hear arguments in the contentious Maui County, Hawaii groundwater case on November 6. It is expected that the settlement – pushed hard for by local and national environmental groups – would prevent the Supreme Court from making a ruling.

"The Maui County Council showed true leadership today in its decision to settle outside of court and not risk a historic standoff over the future of America's clean water at the Supreme Court," Isaac Moriwake, an attorney for Earthjustice told E&E News. "This decision is a win not only for Maui, but for the country at large."

In County of Maui v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund, the argument is centered on whether the CWA applies to pollutants moving through groundwater to "waters of the U.S." The question: Does the CWA's permitting system apply to pollution that moves through groundwater before reaching a federally regulated waterway? Maui County lawyers say the answer is “no”. Their position is based on a careful but disputed reading of the federal statute's text. The law stipulates that the NPDES applies only where there is an addition of a pollutant from a specific "point source" to a WOTUS.

Environmentalists argue the County of Maui needed a CWA permit for the discharges because the wastewater eventually seeped through groundwater and ended up in the Pacific Ocean. The circuit court agreed with environmental groups in Maui that the CWA — which governs the discharge of pollutants from discrete "point sources" into "waters of the United States" — applies even when the pollution migrates through groundwater before reaching a waterway that is subject to federal jurisdiction.

The Family Farm Alliance is part of a group of eight national agriculture organizations that joined in an amicus curiae (“friend of the court”) brief that was transmitted to the U.S. Supreme Court in May. This amicus effort is intended to protect routine agricultural operations from a potentially limitless expansion of the NPDES program. Attorneys involved in this effort are closely watching to see what happens in the aftermath of the Maui council’s decision to settle the lawsuit.

Army Corps Places 6-Month Halt on Water Supply Rule

U.S. Senator and Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife Chairman Kevin Cramer (R-NDS) announced this month that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will halt a final Water Supply Rule from being issued for at least six months in order to better integrate input from stakeholders.

“This is a major victory,” said Senator Cramer. “The Corps’ preferred rule ignores both precedent and statute. It was never the intention of Congress to federalize the water in our country’s major rivers, and the final rule should reflect that. Now that the Corps has reluctantly given this reprieve and expanded the process, it is critical every stakeholder express their concerns and stand up for their rights in order to make the Corps better understand this issue and give us a better product.”

This comes after Senator Cramer led 18 of his colleagues in expressing strong bipartisan opposition to the USACE’s Water Supply Rule rulemaking process, which left these Senators as well as states, tribes, and stakeholders believing reasonable concerns had not been adequately addressed.

“We have attempted to provide input to the Corps on its proposed implementation of federal law, but our concerns have not been adequately addressed,” the group of Senators wrote to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). “We urge you in your capacity to direct the Corps to make the adjustments necessary to follow decades of federal precedent and respect state and tribal water authority.”

OMB also received letters on this issue from the Western Governors Association, the Conference of Western Attorneys General (AGs) and others. The AGs letter describes various provisions of the two statutes and subsequent court cases. It notes that States have the right to appropriate their waters, and the United States may not question such appropriation unless it disturbs the navigability. Even then, the navigation servitude west of the 98th Meridian may not conflict with any beneficial consumptive use, present or future, of waters for domestic, municipal, stock water, irrigation, or mining purposes. The AGs provides six illustrative examples of ways the proposed rule exceeds the Corps’ authority and seeks to usurp state power to control the allocation and distribution of their waters.
Klamath Farmers Free Up Water for National Wildlife Refuge

The combination of responsible water management by irrigators and various favorable weather conditions have led to the Klamath Project in California and Oregon potentially having anywhere between 6,000-21,000 acre-feet of a calculated “Project Supply” available for diversion to the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. This delivery, on top of water already being provided, comes at a critical time for fall waterfowl migration, and was made available through extensive coordination and efforts by Klamath Project irrigators.

“The Klamath Project irrigators understand the importance of the refuge to waterfowl and are pleased to be able to make a water supply available for the critical early fall period when waterfowl start migrating through the Basin,” said Klamath Drainage District Manager Scott White.

Since April, there has been ongoing inter-district coordination and conservation measures, as well as coordination with refuge managers and conservation groups. The timing of the water delivery is paramount in determining the benefit of Lower Klamath Refuge to the waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway.

Under current Endangered Species Act (ESA) restrictions, there is a total “Project Supply” from Upper Klamath Lake calculated for the March-October irrigation season at the Klamath Project. The refuge can only use Project Supply that is in excess of irrigation needs, along with some other sources that exist outside the Project Supply.

In years past, there would have been more than adequate water available for refuge needs, but that has changed due to ESA requirements to maintain water levels in Upper Klamath and to send water down the Klamath River.

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life Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. The Alliance in 2018 provided detailed recommendations for the Services that was developed by a team of resources, law, and policy experts familiar with Western water resource management and how this important function is impacted by implementation of federal laws and regulations.

The Alliance summarized some of those recommendations and expressed support for the Trump regulations in written testimony that was submitted to the WOW Subcommittee record.

“We believe modest changes to implementation of the Act are needed,” said Mr. Keppen. “The Services are taking a measured approach to assessing and making measured and reasonable regulatory changes to the implementation of the ESA, an approach we support.”

Another Successful Trip

It was an action-packed week for this year’s farmer lobbyists, with Congress tackling a variety of pressing issues. Legislative priorities that Congress will likely address during the remaining three months of 2019 include Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations, prescription drug prices and medical bills, gun control, tax issues, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, White House investigations, and water resources legislation. While the farmer lobbyists were in D.C., the Senate passed the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Health Extenders Act of 2019, a bill that was previously passed by the House earlier in the month. President Trump shortly thereafter signed the bill into law, in order to avoid a government shutdown beginning October 1.

Talks between Congressional Democrats and President Trump on a broader infrastructure package have not been productive nor advanced since the spring. However, it is possible that Congress ultimately includes additional infrastructure provisions to a surface transportation package, including, but not limited to, broadband, housing, schools, water, and environmental and energy-related provisions. However, in the waning days of the month, one topic emerged which will likely overshadow everything: the move by House Democrats to begin President Trump’s impeachment proceedings.

This year’s farmer lobbyists waded into a sea of partisan frenzy following the announcement by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to formally throw her support behind an impeachment inquiry of President Trump, accusing him of committing a “betrayal of his oath of office.” Water committee staffers expressed concern about the need to make some quick, solid process on things like the 2020 Water Resources Development Act before the 2020 election and impeachment issues stop everything.

“The overall political climate was tense,” said Mr. Keppen. “Still, the support for new water infrastructure legislation appeared to have backing from both Democrats and Republicans. It was a good time for our farmer lobbyists to be in Washington.”

Mark Limbaugh, Chris Kearney and Zach Israel of The Ferguson Group handled the logistics in D.C.

“The Ferguson Group staff once again deserve a shout-out for the incredible itinerary they developed and professional approach they employed in setting up this year’s trip,” said Mr. Keppen. “The excellent work The Ferguson Group does, and the obvious respect and network they have in D.C. is something we are grateful for.”
A Big Thank You to Our New and Supporting Members!

JUNE-AUGUST 2019

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Washington State Potato Commission

ADVOCATE ($5,000 - $9,999)
Klamath Water Users Association (OR)
Water District #1 (ID)

DEFENDER ($1000-$4999)
Harvey A. Bailey (CA)  Borba Farms Partners (CA)
Klamath Basin Improvement District (OR)  Mccilli Farms (TX)
Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District (ID)  Nebraska State Irrigation Association
North Platte Valley Irrigators Association (NE)  J.R. Simplot Co. (ID)
Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority (CA)  Teixeira & Sons (CA)
Twin Falls Canal Company (ID)  Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District (CA)
Yuba County Water Agency (CA)

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H-Four Farms (AZ)  Little Snake River Conservation District (WY)
Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation District (AZ)  New Magma Irrigation and Drainage District (AZ)
North Unit Irrigation District (OR)  Owyhee Irrigation District (OR)  Redfern Ranches (CA)
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