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# News Release

## Interior Launches WaterSMART Initiative

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today signed a Secretarial order establishing a new water sustainability strategy for the United States. Salazar showcased the Department of the Interior's WaterSMART Initiative at a press conference featuring a geospatial presentation on water supply and demand in the high-tech operations center at the Department's headquarters. The "SMART" in WaterSMART stands for "Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow."

"The federal government's existing water policies and programs simply aren't built for 21st century pressures on water supplies," Salazar said. "Population growth. Climate change. Rising energy demands. Environmental needs. Aging infrastructure. Risks to drinking water supplies. Those are just some of the challenges."

He noted that the 2011 budget proposed by President Obama for the Department of the Interior doubles the current enacted 2010 appropriations for water programs to move the initiative forward. It includes \$72.9 million for the WaterSMART program, which is a total increase of \$36.4 million over 2010.

"Local entities – water districts, water users, and local governments – have demonstrated the greatest foresight and leadership in recent years," added Salazar. "I believe it is time for the federal government to join the movement toward a more sustainable water future."

As part of his order, Salazar announced that he is directing the Department to increase available water supply for agricultural, municipal, industrial, and environmental uses in the western United States by 350,000 acre-feet by 2012.

Joining the Secretary were Deputy Secretary David Hayes, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Anne Castle, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Mike Connor, and other Interior officials.

Salazar noted that stakeholders from the seven Colorado River Basin states will participate in a WaterSMART workshop tomorrow in Nevada to help frame the new initiative and to discuss issues such as how to adjust to the anticipated 20% reduction in water flow in the Colorado River due to climate change. Assistant Secretary Castle, who made the geospatial presentation today, is convening the workshop in Nevada tomorrow.

The WaterSMART Secretarial Order has several parts, all of which are focused on improving water conservation and helping water and resource managers make wise decisions about water use, including:

- A national framework to integrate and coordinate water sustainability efforts of the Department and its federal, state and private partners. WaterSMART expands the Bureau of Reclamation's various

grant programs and its studies of entire river basins. WaterSMART will also give a big boost to the U.S. Geological Survey's National Water Census, which will be conducted for the first time in 30 years.

- A WaterSMART Clearinghouse for the American public. Through the clearinghouse, the Department will provide leadership and assistance to state and local governments, tribal nations, and others in water conservation and sustainable water strategies. The clearinghouse will bring all stakeholders together to identify best practices in water conservation, incentives, and the most cost-effective technologies.
- Criteria that the Department applies to identify and support energy projects and actions that promote sustainable water strategies. WaterSMART will identify the water footprint of various energy technologies and make sure that it is considered as part of any decision process on the development of such technologies.
- A water footprint reduction program for facilities and water-consuming operations to achieve and exceed the goal established by President Obama to reduce overall consumption of potable water by 26 percent by 2020 and industrial, landscaping, and agricultural water by 20 percent by 2020.

WaterSMART will coordinate with the Department's Task Force on Energy and Climate Change and its Climate Change Response Council, working with the Department's regional Climate Science Centers and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives to obtain the best available science and ensure sustainable water strategies in the field offices of bureaus and agencies. The program will make recommendations for enhancements to information collection, analysis and delivery where needed.

A complete copy of the Secretarial order can be found at  
<http://doi.gov/news/pressreleases/upload/WaterSMARTOrder.pdf>

**<< Previous**

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Service Director Sam Hamilton

**Next >>**

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wide Policy on Tribal Consultation  
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Directive