

# SB-66

To efficiently facilitate the equitable distribution of water resources across the nation and between the states, as well as prevent the abuse of water resources.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION BOYS NATION

Mr. Chavez of New Mexico introduced the following bill;

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## A BILL

To efficiently facilitate the equitable distribution of water resources across the nation and between the states, as well as prevent the abuse of water resources.

*Be it enacted by The American Legion Boys Nation Senate assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Equitable Water Allocation Act of 2022".

### SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this bill:

The term "river" is defined as a body of water flowing in a channel, including all tributaries of said channel.

The term "water resources" refers to all natural bodies of water, including rivers, lakes, streams, aquifers, glaciers, groundwater basins, and other entities not specifically mentioned.

The term "exclusive jurisdiction" refers to a body of water contained entirely within one state's borders.

A state is considered to be in "drought" when annual rainfall is diminished, and dry weather so prevalent, as to result in ecological damage in the form of crop failure, and water supply shortages, operationally defined as anything equally below a -2.9 on the Palmer Drought Severity Index.

The term "Secretary" refers to the Secretary of the Interior.

### **SECTION 3. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds that:

Over 41% of land in the continental United States is currently experiencing a drought;

From 2000 to 2020, between 20% and 70% of land in the United States experienced drought-like conditions;

There are currently zero federal protections for states experiencing droughts, and no procedure for ensuring the fair distribution and sharing of water resources between states.

### **SECTION 4. ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO WATER RESOURCES.**

(1) Water resources, which are not part of a state's exclusive jurisdiction, will require the consent of all said states for use and exploitation.

(2) States which share water resources are expected to ensure the equal access and use of water resources which pass through their borders, especially ensuring the stable flow of water resources.

(3) States in drought are to be given special water grants through the Department of the Interior, ensuring increased priority to aid in the cultivation of crops and ensure access to water for those directly affected by droughts.

(4) States through interstate compacts will establish standards for the monitoring of water use, and will serve as an intermediary between the states and the Department of the Interior, and will provide

the Secretary reports on water use by the states and the work done by those compacts.

## **SECTION 5. PREVENTING ABUSE OF WATER RESOURCES.**

In order to ensure that water resources are not overused or abused by any state, this bill will implement the following provisions:

(1) Accounting for population size and the present need for water per state in order to proportionately distribute water resources. The emphasis will be focused on meeting the water resource requirements of each state in relation to the population size.

(2) In order to prevent the overuse of water resources, the Department of the Interior shall use references from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Agriculture, in order to rank each State on its semiannual cumulative moisture on the last day of the sixth month and last month of the fiscal year, thus deciding their needs for state-wide drought relief and irrigation programs.

(3) Inspections, administered by the Secretary of the Interior, of each state's use of water resources will be conducted annually to assess the fairness of the distribution of water and ensure transparency in evaluating fair use standards.

(4) All projects managed by interstate compacts or any implementations of standards from the Department of the Interior, will be recorded and stored for public consumption.

(5) This bill will ensure that the water needs of a state, especially one affected by drought, will take precedence over the needs of commercial entities.