



**ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN STATE ENGINEERS
2016 POSITION STATEMENT
FUNDING OF THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY COOPERATIVE
WATER PROGRAM AND THE NATIONAL STREAMFLOW INFORMATION PROGRAM**

The surface and ground waters in the United States are of strategic importance to the health and security of the nation's people, agriculture, industry, and ecology. Moreover, the western states rely on and use this information on a daily basis to assist in water management and emergency response. Increased demands for these resources increase the need for wise planning. Information on water supplies of the country is essential to any water supply management effort. However, as the need has increased, the capacity to meet the need for basic data has decreased.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) traditionally has had the primary responsibility for collecting, compiling, and publishing basic water data for surface and ground water throughout the nation. Recent shifts in priorities, changes in funding mechanisms, Administration initiatives, and higher administrative costs and budget cuts within the USGS have decreased the number of collection sites and adversely affected its ability to meet the current and future needs of the water measurement program. Studies that rely on the data from this program have been proportionally impacted.

The Association of Western State Engineers believes it is essential for the USGS to make data collection and maintenance of a robust national gage network its highest priority. The Association of Western State Engineers strongly urges Congress and the President to fully fund the National Streamflow Information Program and return funding for the Cooperative Water Program to its historic 50-50 cost-share for cooperators, and to adequately fund other data collection efforts while restoring cost efficiency by:

- A. Encouraging the USGS to assist state data collection programs through cost sharing, establishing standards, providing training, and research to improve data collection methods.
- B. Encouraging the consistency, integrity, and long-term viability of surface and ground water data collected under the Cooperative Water Program by directing that the collection, compiling, and publishing of data continue to be undertaken consistent with USGS standards.
- C. Ensuring that data collected consistent with standard methodologies is made available on a real time basis and is properly archived so it is available to the western states in the future.

Further, the Association of Western State Engineers opposes efforts by Congress to mandate that the USGS privatize data collection and data management efforts.

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Association of Western State Engineers

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