

EQUILIBRIUM & SUSTAINABILITY

Utah, Arizona senators launch bipartisan push for water infrastructure funding

BY SHARON UDASIN - 05/16/25 2:52 PM ET



Greg Nash

Sen. John Curtis (R-Utah) asks questions during a Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee hearing on May 8, 2025, in Washington.

Sens. [Mark Kelly](#) (D-Ariz.) and [John Curtis](#) (R-Utah) have launched a bipartisan push aimed at strengthening water infrastructure across the U.S. West — an arid region coping with a growing population and ever-dwindling resources.

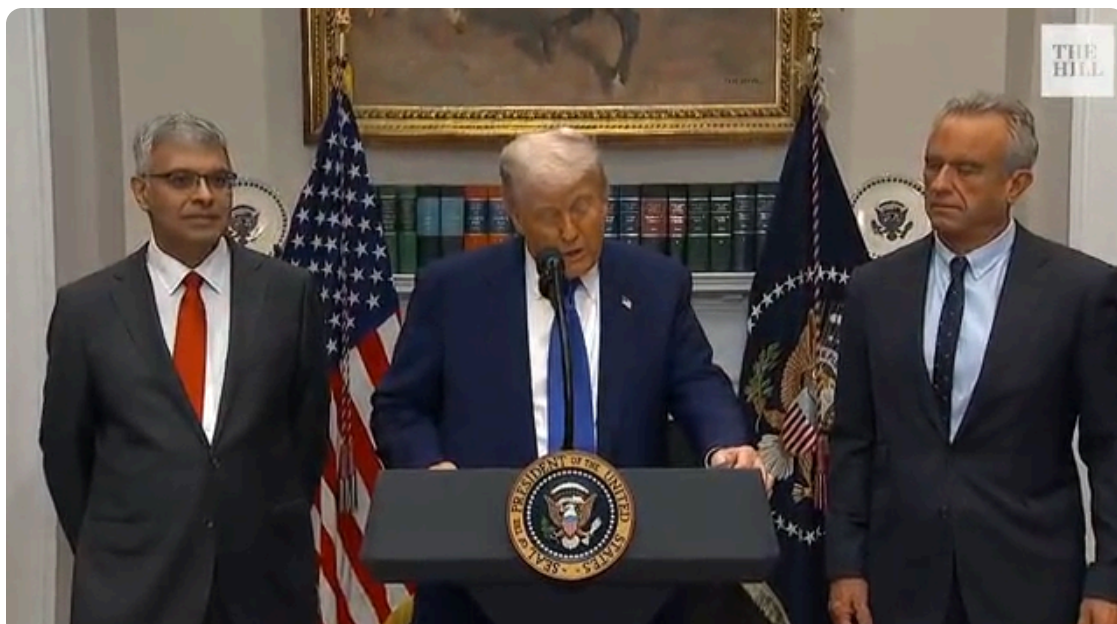
The senators this week introduced the [Restoring WIFIA Eligibility Act](#), a bipartisan and bicameral bill that seeks to unlock federal funding for Western water infrastructure.

“Utah’s rapid population growth is placing significant pressure on our community water resources,” Curtis [said in a statement](#).

“This bipartisan legislation would make it easier for local governments and utilities to invest in critical water infrastructure projects — helping ensure we can meet the growing needs of our communities,” the first-term Republican added.

WIFIA refers to the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, which created a [crediting](#) program for public and private borrowers working on wastewater, drinking water and stormwater projects.

ADVERTISEMENT



WIFIA loans were designed to help communities undertake critical water initiatives with greater affordability, but **certain terms of the legislation have hampered** projects that have any federal involvement, according to the senators.

While the projects tend to be managed by **nonfederal** entities, erroneous classifications of these **programs** as “federal” have rendered some of them ineligible for WIFIA loans, which are only available to “non-federal borrowers,” they explained.

Sign up for the Morning Report

The latest in politics and policy. Direct to your inbox.

Email address

SUBSCRIBE

By signing up, I agree to the Terms of Use, have reviewed the Privacy Policy, and to receive personalized offers and communications via email, on-site notifications, and targeted advertising using my email address from The Hill, Nexstar Media Inc., and its affiliates

What Kelly and Curtis’s new act strives to do is ensure that WIFIA assistance is deemed nonfederal, as long as the recipient is a nonfederal entity and repayment sources are nonfederal.

The new legislation **also seeks to make accessible an array** of new critical water infrastructure projects, including those that involve cost-sharing between federal and nonfederal entities.

This allowance, the senators stressed, would enable communities to optimize the benefits of completing such essential projects.

“Strengthening Arizona’s water infrastructure is key to the growth and prosperity of our state,” Kelly said in a statement, noting that the bill “will cut red tape” to expand access to federal funds.

This shared effort, Kelly added, could “help modernize our water infrastructure and address critical water challenges facing communities in Arizona and the West.”

Companion legislation has been introduced in the House by Reps. Jim Costa (D-Calif.) and Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.).

TAGS JOHN CURTIS MARK KELLY