



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUL 22 2014

Dear Advisory Committee on Water Information Representatives and Alternates:

I hope this message finds you well. I look forward to seeing you all at our upcoming meeting in Reston, Virginia on August 19-20. I very much appreciate the work of the Climate Adaptation and Shrinking Budget work groups that have been so active for the past months and years. The advice that you give to the Department of the Interior and all the Federal agencies is important and greatly appreciated.

One of the topics I would like you to consider and discuss at the August meeting is a new effort we are calling the Open Water Data Initiative. As this group knows better than anyone, a substantial portion of U.S. water resources are currently stressed by increasing demand, diminished supplies, and altered quality. Large areas of the country are vulnerable to extreme water-related events, both drought and floods. These stresses can be exacerbated by changes in land use, population growth, and climate change. Despite the significant investments in monitoring, modeling, and analysis made by the state and federal governments, local communities, and water distribution entities, we do not yet have an integrated system of freely accessible, standardized water data to support sound decision-making and management. One of the ways we can enhance the resilience of our water resources is by improving the discoverability, accessibility, and usability of water information. The Open Water Data Initiative is designed to do just that.

To help you prepare for our discussion, I have attached a proposal that describes the Initiative goals, approach, and expected products. Note that the proposal is clear that this initiative will build on existing efforts around water data integration, like the Integrated Water Resources Science and Services (IWRSS) collaboration among the National Weather Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Geological Survey, the Western States Water Council's Water Data Exchange (WaDE) project, and the Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science, Inc. (CUAHSI).

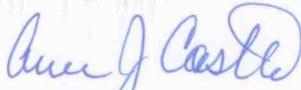
Key to the success of the initiative will be having a committed group of knowledgeable stakeholders from across the water resources community to shepherd this important effort forward. To that end, we propose reviving and repopulating ACWI's Subcommittee on Spatial Water Data and charging it with coordinating and overseeing the Open Water Data Initiative activities. You may recall that the Subcommittee on Spatial Water Data is jointly sponsored by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and ACWI. The FGDC Steering Committee enthusiastically approved the attached proposal after a discussion at its recent meeting on June 26, and I hope we can gain your approval at the ACWI meeting in August. If we charge the Subcommittee on Spatial Water Data with this effort, we will need to name new members to the

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subcommittee, so please think about who has the passion and knowledge to help guide this effort to a successful outcome.

Thank you for considering this proposal and I look forward to our discussions in August.

Sincerely,



Anne J. Castle
Chair, Advisory Committee
on Water Information