

White House holds water summit, federal agencies invest in water-research projects

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In celebration of World Water Day, The White House held a Water Summit on March 22 to highlight the need to conserve, protect, and better manage the nation's water resources. John Holdren, the Director of the White House Office of Science, Technology, and Policy (OSTP), presented on the global state of water resources. Holdren highlighted the rising world demand for water, the dependency of energy production on water, and the deteriorating state of U.S. water infrastructure. He made a call for collaboration across the federal, private, and public sectors to solve these problems.

The summit included a panel on innovative finance and water-infrastructure solutions, as well as a panel on water science. Kathryn Sullivan, Administrator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), presented on the agency's role in conserving water and drought monitoring.

In conjunction with the summit, The White House has released multiple documents concerning water sustainability, including a fact sheet on challenges and opportunities for water technology, an action plan on long-term drought resilience, and a commitment outlining the Obama Administration's and federal agencies' pledge to build a sustainable water future for the United States.

Drought-related commitments include the creation of the National Drought Resilience Partnership (NSRP), an expansion of the U.S. Drought Monitor at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and NOAA, and the announcement of public-private coordination between the USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center, The Wildlife Conservation Society, and The Nature Conservancy.

The Administration's pledge also focuses on water-research projects, outlining nearly \$35 million in grants, including \$20 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF) through the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), \$8.5 million from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Water for Agriculture program, and \$3.3 million through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to various institutions.

Other pledges include enhancing weather forecasts, recovering resources from wastewater, releasing a new National Water Model through NOAA, improving information and tools involved with water resources, and raising public awareness and engagement.

Sources: The White House, Youtube.com, National Science Foundation (NSF), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
