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For immediate release:

State of North Dakota and Tribes Make Joint Trip to Washington, DC to Thank Congressional Delegation for Municipal, Rural & Industrial Water Supply Funding

CARRINGTON (December 16, 2009) – State leaders and members from North Dakota’s tribes recently traveled to Washington, DC, to meet with the North Dakota Congressional Delegation to discuss water supply projects funded through the Garrison Diversion Unit Municipal, Rural and Industrial Program (MR&I).

Members from the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and ND State Water Commission, as well as members from Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Standing Rock Sioux, and Three Affiliated Tribes attended.

“We are very appreciative of the opportunity to work together with the tribes on state-wide water issues. I feel our meetings with the North Dakota delegation and the Bureau of Reclamation were very positive and successful,” said Garrison Diversion Conservancy District Board Chairman John Leininger.

While in Washington, DC, three meetings were attended by the group; one with the Commissioner of Reclamation, Mike Connor, a joint meeting with Senator Byron Dorgan and Senator Kent Conrad, and one with Representative Earl Pomeroy. The state and tribal officials briefed the delegation on the progress of the current MR&I projects, as well as plans for the future.

In recent years, thanks in large part to U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) and his position as chairman of the Senate Energy & Water Appropriations Subcommittee within the Appropriations Committee, funding appropriated to the Garrison Diversion Unit MR&I program has increased to nearly ten times the average amount previously received. In 2009, the State received \$24 million for water supply projects and the North Dakota tribes received \$24 million.

Senator Conrad, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, authored a budget for FY 2010 which included language giving priority to rural water projects in North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana. It recommended not less than \$292 million for the rural water projects in these states.

