

Arizona Water Experts Laud Bureau of Reclamation for Urging Action on Drought Contingency Planning

Commissioner's Comments Reflect Need for Swift, Collaborative Action

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PHOENIX – Today, Brenda Burman, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, urged water managers in the Lower and Upper basin to adopt Drought Contingency Plans (DCPs) in light of new Mid Term Operation Modeling (MTOM) results. The modeling—which represents the most accurate and up-to-date look at the hydrology of the Colorado River basin—confirmed that Arizona and the West face continued challenges amidst an unusually dry spring.

Some key findings from the modeling include:

- Forecast models predict a 52 percent chance of shortage conditions at Lake Mead beginning in 2020, with a greater than 60 percent likelihood of shortage thereafter.
- The Bureau emphasized today that because of drought and low runoff conditions dating back to 18 years to 2000, “this current period is one of the worst drought cycles over the past 1,200 plus years.”

In response to the Commissioner’s comments and new data, **Kevin Moran, Chairman of the [Water for Arizona Coalition](#) and Senior Director, Environmental Defense Fund**, issued the following statement: “I commend Commissioner Burman for recognizing the urgency of getting all parties back to the table for a sustainable Colorado River. We are pleased to see support from all the Basin States and the federal government for collaborative solutions. Now Arizona needs to make it happen. To move forward, the roadblocks to Legislative approval of the DCP must be removed by the kind of stakeholder collaboration for which Arizona has always been known. Arizonans must address the issues of mitigating the impact on Pinal County Agriculture in times of declared shortage because they are placed at risk first in shortage, and developing an “Excess Water” compromise for all that depend on the economic vitality created by a secure Colorado River supply.

“These modeling results largely confirm what we already knew: Lake Mead, which supplies much of Arizona’s water, is vulnerable to shortages in the next five years. Without urgent action from our water leaders to plan for the very real possibility of a water shortage, Arizona’s future and its way of life are at risk,” said Moran.

About the Water for Arizona Coalition

The Water for Arizona Coalition is comprised of Arizonans who support policies and innovative practices to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state’s needs. Organizational support is provided by solutions-oriented groups like American Rivers, Audubon Arizona, Business of Water Stewardship, Environmental Defense Action Fund and Western Resource Advocates, which collectively have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreators across the

state. Kevin Moran, a longtime Arizonan and former government relations consultant is the Chairman of the Coalition.