

Water for Arizona Coalition Applauds Critical Progress and Funding Commitments for Arizona's Drought Contingency Plan

Coalition lauds latest proposal and encourages continued collaboration to finalize and implement the state's plan

The Water for Arizona Coalition celebrates a significant step forward on the completion of Arizona's Drought Contingency Plan (DCP), which includes critical provisions for flexible water management and ensures that Arizonans will be able to live and thrive in a drier future.

The Water for Arizona Coalition particularly applauds three key tenets discussed in yesterday's Steering Committee meeting:

- Governor Ducey's pledge to allocate \$30 million in funding for system conservation as a part of the implementation of DCP
- The readiness of the Walton Family Foundation and Water Funders Initiative to work in partnership with public funders and other stakeholders to fill the \$8 million funding gap for system conservation in the Lower Basin
- The benefits of the proposed mitigation for the Colorado River system and water levels in Lake Mead

"I am encouraged by the Arizona Steering Committee's efforts seeking creative solutions and fair compromises to more sustainably manage our increasingly scarce Colorado River water. The latest proposal is promising because it conserves more water in Lake Mead through a mix of mechanisms and incentives to reduce water demand, including system conservation projects and water trading among cities, tribes and irrigation districts," **said Kevin Moran, Senior Director for the Colorado River Program at Environmental Defense Fund, Chair of the Water for Arizona Coalition, and an official alternate member of the Arizona Steering Committee.** "The Water for Arizona Coalition urges the steering committee members to keep the momentum going to finalize an Arizona drought contingency plan by the end of the year."

"The proposed framework represents significant progress toward the responsible, meaningful agreement that Arizonans must reach to ensure we will have reliable water resources into the near future," **said Kim Mitchell, Senior Water Policy Advisor for Western Resource Advocates.** "These decisions are extremely hard, but we all need to learn to do more with less, and this plan will help Arizonans prepare for a drier future while shoring up our vital water supplies throughout the Colorado River Basin."

"Arizona companies want to invest and grow throughout the state." **said Todd Reeve, Director of Business for Water Stewardship.** "But in order to make commitments and remain competitive, these businesses require certainty around a long-term and predictable water supply from the Colorado River—the DCP provides the pathway to keep Arizona competitive and sustain long-term business success. However, work remains to be done to ensure reliable funding for groundwater infrastructure for Pinal County agriculture so that the agricultural community has groundwater to turn to when surface water is curtailed."

"The DCP is the best lever we have to protect and sustain Arizona's water supplies for the people and birds that rely on them. Future generations of Arizonans—all of whom depend on our ability to be forward-thinking about our water—will benefit from this plan to improve the reliability of the Colorado River's water supply," **said Sonia Perillo, Audubon Arizona's**

Executive Director. “This is a step in the right direction for Arizona and the rest of the Colorado River Basin.”

“This most recent progress gives Arizona communities and the Colorado River good reason to celebrate,” **said Jeff Odefey, American Rivers’ Director of Clean Water Supply.** “Water users and providers from across the state have put aside differences to reach a collaborative solution, one that adds security to Arizona’s water future.”

The coalition commends the leadership of those involved in the Drought Contingency Plan process, including Governor Ducey, leaders in the legislature, the Director of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Tom Buschatzke, General Manager of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) Ted Cooke, Governor Lewis and the Gila River Indian Community, Chairman Patch and the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the CAP Board as a whole, the members of the Steering Committee and the Bureau of Reclamation, under the leadership of Commissioner Brenda Burman.

About the Water for Arizona Coalition

The Water for Arizona Coalition comprises Arizonans who support policies and innovative practices to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state’s needs. Organizational support is provided by solution-oriented groups like Business for Water Stewardship, American Rivers, Audubon Arizona, 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 long-time Arizonan and former government relations consultant, is the Chairman of the Coalition.

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