

November 12, 2018

Dear DCP Steering Committee Members:

This Committee was convened to enable Arizona to move forward on the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan. For months, I have attended all the meetings of the DCP Steering Committee and of the three working groups. I have listened to the stakeholders, asked many questions in private, and am now deeply concerned about the breakdown of communication and the dire prospect of the impending failure to reach agreement.

I would like to respectfully remind everyone that the Bureau of Reclamation projects there is a 1 in 5 chance that by 2026 water levels in Lake Mead could plummet to the point where water will no longer be available for the Lower Basin. Even more immediate is the specter of water levels in Lake Mead falling below 1075 feet (Tier 1) in 2020 and 1050 feet (Tier 2) in 2022. Tier 2 shortages would be crippling to our CAP water supplies and the future of Central Arizona.

Faced with that potential catastrophe, it is our duty to find compromise in order to protect all of the citizens of Arizona. That means that no interest group, water user or water rights holder can get everything it wants. It means bringing an end to attempts to vilify other water users and casting aspersions on their motives. It means it is time for everyone involved to rise to the challenge of negotiating for the common good of the State of Arizona.

And what does that mean? It means we cannot forget the fundamental goal of the Drought Contingency Plan, which is to leave more water in Lake Mead in order to stave off crisis. Many of the proposals that have been offered run counter to this goal or merely shuffle the deck of water rights without contributing a drop to Lake Mead. Some threaten the Law of the River and vested water right priorities and will surely

be challenged in court. Some will unduly burden one segment of the population for the benefit of another.

I challenge you to return to those whom you represent and convince them that all of us must share the pain of the water reductions needed to keep Lake Mead alive. We need the Drought Contingency Plan now. The longer we argue and delay, the more we risk. Time is our enemy. We are facing a common crisis and will all have to take a hit or face the judgment of history.

As a native Arizonan, I implore you to put aside your differences and return to the table in a reenergized effort to do all we can to protect Lake Mead.

Respectfully,
Senator Lisa Otondo