

Senator Lisa Otondo

Arizona State Senate
1700 WEST WASHINGTON
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2844
CAPITOL PHONE: (602) 926-3002
TOLL FREE: 1-800-352-8404
lotondo@azleg.gov

DISTRICT 4



COMMITTEES:

NATURAL RESOURCES,
ENERGY & WATER
TRANSPORTATION &
TECHNOLOGY

Arizona State Senate

December 3, 2018

Dear CAWCD Board Members and DCP Steering Committee Members,

The DCP Implementation Plan proposed at the November 29, 2018 Steering Committee meeting was a delicate compromise. Nearly every interest group has some problems with it, but nearly every interest group indicated its support during the comment portion of the meeting. Most importantly, the proposal would leave water in Lake Mead to achieve the goal of the Drought Contingency Plan. The so-called “Friendly Amendment” offered by CAWCD undermines the good faith negotiations that led to this hard fought compromise.

Please let me explain my observations and perspective. The amendment was not circulated in advance, creating deep suspicion about its drafters’ motives. This threatens to trigger further amendments from others who want to modify the deal, thus negating the progress we have made. My experience in the legislature has taught me that one ill-conceived modification can unravel an agreement and divert us from our common goal.

While the amendment is vague and confusing, one thing is clear—it would make more than the “minor modifications” described when it was presented. Most grievously, it would transfer first priority water purchased from the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) to the Central Arizona Project. CAWCD proposes to use the CRIT water to make a portion of Arizona's required contributions to DCP. Relieved of its obligation to contribute lower priority CAP water to DCP, CAWCD would be free to divert more water from Lake Mead and deliver it to undisclosed CAP water users, instead of doing all it can to keep water in the Lake. That is contrary to what we are all trying to achieve.

From the beginning, all participants in this process have known that any transfer of Colorado River water to central Arizona would be unacceptable. My constituents, including on-river users and cities, are vehemently opposed to this amendment. It is a deal breaker.

Lake Mead is in serious danger of crashing to disastrous levels. Again, I remind you that time is not our friend. Governor Ducey has pledged \$30 million to facilitate the DCP implementation plan as presented, and not this last minute add-on. We must preserve the compromise that has been reached and the progress we have made. The CAWCD Board should withdraw its proposed amendment, showing it is supportive of the common goal. If it does not, the DCP Steering Committee must reject the amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa A. Otondo".

Senator Lisa Otondo
Legislative District 4