

## Colorado River Reductions Confirmed for 2022

The August 24-Month Study will be released by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation today, and the details within that study will confirm that a Tier 1 Shortage will be declared for 2022.

This Colorado River Shortage [is not a surprise](#). We have been expecting it for years but just didn't know when it would actually happen, that is until now. As explained in [last week's blog](#), this Tier 1 shortage is occurring because Lake Mead's elevation is below 1,075 feet, which means that Arizona will receive 512,000 acre-feet less Colorado River water for Central Arizona, primarily impacting agriculture.



Although it is called a Tier 1 Shortage, it would be more accurately described as a “reduction,” a “planned reduction.” The [2019 Drought Contingency Plan \(DCP\)](#) uses the term “contribution” because when Lake Mead levels fall, western states and Mexico will continue to take less water. DCP was designed to respond to the worsening Colorado River conditions and is all part of a broader plan to protect the health of the Colorado River. DCP has been a positive step taken by Arizona, the other Basin States, and the Federal Government. Still, it is constructive and vital that they are already looking at how to improve the management of the River beyond DCP.

While under a Tier 1 Shortage, municipal water providers will still receive the same amount of Colorado River water, yet many wonder what will happen if Colorado River conditions worsen?

Simply put, the AMWUA cities recognize the conditions on the Colorado River are not expected to get significantly better anytime soon. The AMWUA cities have known that beyond a Tier 1 Shortage, other shortage reductions in Colorado River water are more than likely. So for decades, the cities [have invested](#) in diverse and reliable water portfolios, funding infrastructure and technology improvements, instilling a conservation ethic, building drought, and shortage preparedness plans, and storing water underground for times of need. These efforts are long-term and will be continually built upon, so we must continue to invest in our water systems to ensure we are always resilient.

Yet while the AMWUA cities have robust and reliable water supplies, we never have enough to waste. That is why water conservation is vital to safeguarding our water resources now and for future generations. A collective commitment to using water efficiently now and for future generations must exist among residents, municipalities, businesses, industries, agriculture, and decision-makers. So being responsible with the water we have is up to each of us – we all play a part in this.

We recognize that citizens understand the importance of conservation and want to know how they can step up and help in serious times like these. That is precisely why the AMWUA cities have invested in programs and resources to help residents and businesses use water more efficiently. For a plethora of conservation ideas, visit your [city's conservation website](#), check out [What You Can Do](#), and visit [Water Use it Wisely](#) for practical tips on how to conserve water.

The reality is we live in the desert, where water conservation needs to be a permanent lifestyle, not a short-term reaction to an ongoing challenge.

*For over 50 years, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association has worked to protect our member cities' ability to provide assured, safe, and sustainable water supplies to their communities. For more water information, visit [www.amwua.org](http://www.amwua.org).*