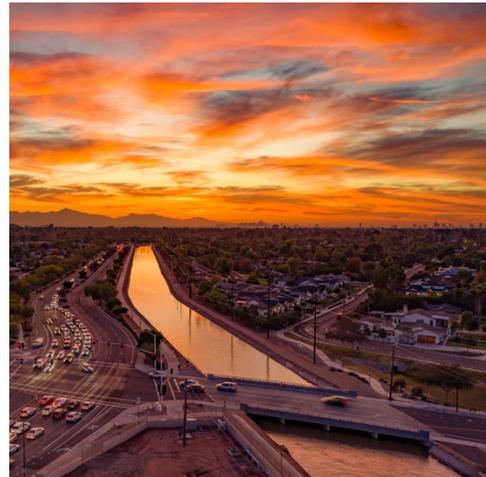


## Reflecting on a Busy Year in Water

2021 was a big year in water, and all the interest garnered these past 12 months will undoubtedly spill over into the new year as a Tier 1 Shortage begins and the impact of drought and climate change deepens, all of which reiterates there is still plenty of work to be done in the world of water.

Before we enter the new year, this is a prime opportunity to pause and recognize what the AMWUA municipalities accomplished in 2021 and the progress made regarding issues that impact their ability to continually provide sustainable and reliable water supplies well into the future, including their extensive preparations for the Tier 1 shortage years in advance.



## COLORADO RIVER SHORTAGE PREPARATIONS

**Conservation:** Our prolonged drought and upcoming Tier 1 shortage reinforced the importance of being responsible with all of the water we have. For over 35 years, AMWUA has overseen a comprehensive regional conservation program that leads the way in demand management. This past year, conservation staff ramped up their water-efficient programs and resources to assist their residents and businesses in using water efficiently.

**Water Loss Program:** The AMWUA cities completed a Water Loss Control Training and Technical Assistance Program funded by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and facilitated by AMWUA staff. The Program further highlights the AMWUA cities' commitment to improve their capabilities to reduce their water loss volumes, which is already well below the national average. This program is a win for Arizona and was made possible through the foresight of ADWR and its willingness to support state-of-the-art management approaches for our water resources and infrastructure.

**Regional Communications:** Throughout the year, AMWUA facilitated a series of Regional Communications Meetings for municipalities, water providers, and agencies to align Colorado River shortage preparation efforts. This also created a platform for information exchange and coordination in education and outreach to ensure member cities and leaders had access to vital information and facts surrounding the Tier 1 Shortage on the Colorado River.

**Drought Preparedness Plans:** Each city has a unique drought and shortage preparedness plan to address and manage various scenarios. This year, the AMWUA municipalities dug into those plans to conduct a thorough review and make any necessary updates. To assist with their commitment to preparedness planning, AMWUA created an AMWUA Members' Drought

Preparedness Plans Summary Matrix - an internal, information-sharing resource, to help facilitate discussions amongst members, now and moving forward.

**Finances:** The AMWUA cities have prepared in various ways for the Tier 1 shortage, including financially, which is always a critical area of focus. Since a shortage means less Colorado River water will be conveyed through the Central Arizona Project, the cost to deliver that water will increase, and cities know they will have to pay higher rates to CAP. In leading up to the shortage, the cities have had to factor in those anticipated increased costs into rate adjustments and adapt their budgets accordingly.

## **SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT**

**5<sup>th</sup> Management plans:** AMWUA actively participated in ADWR's development of the 5<sup>th</sup> Management Plan, which is to provide continued oversight of groundwater in the Phoenix region. AMWUA developed comprehensive proposals to improve the conservation regulatory programs administered by ADWR that large municipal providers must comply with when the 5<sup>th</sup> Management Plan becomes effective in 2025. The AMWUA cities recognize that the management of our groundwater is critical to their economic success, so AMWUA analyzed and provided feedback to ADWR's proposed modifications in the 5<sup>th</sup> Management Plan.

**Post-2025 AMAs Committee:** Since the wise management of water is vital to the AMWUA cities, AMWUA has actively participated in the Post-2025 AMAs Committee of the Governor's Water Council. The Committee is to identify ways to improve water management beyond 2025 within the Active Management Areas (AMAs) in Phoenix, Tucson, Pinal, Prescott, and Santa Cruz AMAs. The Committee identified issues and challenges that we need to address to ensure sound water management continues after 2025.

## **LEGISLATION**

**2021 Legislative Session:** The marathon, six-month 2021 legislative session included more than 60 individual bills related to Arizona's water laws. AMWUA analyzed each one before taking formal positions. AMWUA led a collaborative effort to pass one significant bill - SB 1147, which streamlines the recovery of water stored underground, ultimately benefiting customers of all municipal water providers.

**Drought Mitigation Fund:** This year's State budget included significant investments in Arizona's water future, including establishing the Drought Mitigation Revolving Fund of \$160 million. The Fund can be used to support Colorado River system conservation, water development projects on State Lands, and long-term loans for "planning, designing, constructing, or financing water supply [importation] projects from outside this state."

**Vetting Forum 4 Water:** To prepare for the 2022 legislative session, AMWUA, along with the Agribusiness & Water Council, continued facilitating the Vetting Forum 4 Water this fall. These meetings provide a platform for Legislators and water stakeholders to start discussing

proposed water legislation. The Vetting Forum 4 Water has been a positive step forward for evaluating legislative concepts early in the process rather than in the heated throes of an active legislative session.

While we wrap up a busy year in water, the municipalities look to 2022, recognizing more than ever the importance of continued wise water stewardship through planning, financing, and implementing smart management practices to ensure their water supplies remain protected and viable into the future. At AMWUA, we will continue to facilitate discussions among our members, educate and inform decision-makers and the public about critical water issues and the importance of conservation, collaborate for regional and statewide solutions and advocate with one voice for those solutions just like we did throughout 2021.

*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).*