

WATER AGENCIES UNITE AND COMMIT TO REDUCING DEMANDS ON COLORADO RIVER

Multi-agency agreement outlines best practices and water-saving actions to protect water supplies serving 40 million Americans

Nov. 16, 2022 – Recognizing that a reliable water supply is critical to all economies and communities relying on the drought-stricken Colorado River, more than 30 water agencies and providers have committed to take additional actions to reducing water demands and helping protect the Colorado River system.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was delivered to the Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton, municipal and public water providers in the Upper and Lower Colorado River Basin affirmed their commitments to implement comprehensive and innovative water conservation programs, initiatives, policies, and actions within their communities, including:

- Expanding water efficiency programs for indoor and outdoor water use.
- Implementing programs and policies reducing and replacing non-functional, decorative grass by 30 percent while protecting urban landscapes and trees canopies.
- Increasing water reuse and recycling programs where feasible.
- Implementing water efficiency strategies and best practices, such as water loss controls, conservation-based rate structures, industrial and commercial conservation, land use coordination and other suitable conservation strategies within each community.

“As we consider the long-term aridification of the Colorado River Basin, the math is simple: water uses exceed water supplies,” said John Entsminger, General Manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. “But solving that equation will require all Colorado River water users across every sector to make hard decisions and be fully invested in water conservation if we are going to bring our shared river system into balance.”

“This problem is of the highest magnitude, but collectively we have the resources to find the solution,” said Brenda Burman, Executive Strategy Advisor of Central Arizona Project. “The path forward will require all Colorado River water users to contribute, and Central Arizona Project continues to make investments and commitments to support the Basin to reach a sustainable water future.”

“The significance of nearly 30 municipal and industrial providers of Colorado River water signing on to this agreement is truly historic,” said Gene Shawcroft, General Manager of the Central Utah Water Conservancy District. “The commitments of municipal and industrial water agencies in both the Upper and Lower Colorado River Basins toward a unified approach to problem solving is critical in light of the current drought conditions and historic low reservoir elevations confronting the basin. I hope this agreement will provide an example of effective Basin-wide collaboration on the many Colorado River issues we face now and into the future.”

“Forging a sustainable future for the Colorado River will take a commitment from all of us to use less water. More than two dozen water agencies from cities across the Southwest have made this commitment on behalf of the millions of people they serve,” said Adel Hagekhalil, General Manager

of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. “This MOU is a key step towards bringing the River into balance, and powerful proof that working together, we can build solutions.”

Under the MOU, each participating water provider will implement the conservation actions, programs and/or policies most appropriate for its individual communities and water efficiency goals. While these water agencies primarily represent urban water uses, which is only a small fraction of the Colorado River’s total water consumption, the conservation strategies outlined will help reduce demands and protect water levels in lakes Powell and Mead.

“A sustainable, long-term plan for the Colorado River Basin requires all water users to reduce water demand commensurate with what the Colorado River can realistically supply given the new normal of hotter, drier weather,” said Ron Burke, President and CEO of the Alliance for Water Efficiency. “To this end, the Alliance for Water Efficiency commends the commitments from local water providers to expand water efficiency and conservation programs.”

In a joint letter of support, seven environmental, conservation, and non-governmental organizations called the MOU “an important step in the right direction,” further stating that “achieving these commitments is a necessary first phase to preserve the longevity of the Basin.”

Today’s announcement builds upon an initial MOU executed in August 2022 between Aurora Water, Denver Water, The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Pueblo Water and Southern Nevada Water Authority, significantly expanding participation and commitments from water providers across the Basin to implement best practices to conserve and enhance water efficiency.

Links to the [Memorandum of Understanding](#), [Water Provider Letters](#), [Joint Letter from NGOs](#) and [Alliance for Water Efficiency Letter](#)

Below is a list of all participating municipal and public water providers, as well as the respective media contacts:

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