

Community Leaders Discuss Current Water Challenges and Commit to Finding Solutions

Leaders from Valley communities gathered with U.S. Senator Kyrsten Sinema at AMWUA last week to discuss the water challenges they collectively face as the Colorado River situation escalates. City leaders understand that the declining conditions of the River will mean Valley water providers will have less Colorado River water in the future. They acknowledge the importance of regional collaboration and federal funding as they move forward with infrastructure projects necessary to continue providing community residents and businesses with reliable water supplies.



The meeting provided an opportunity for Senator Sinema to hear firsthand from the cities what their water needs are and how the Federal Government can assist in ensuring we have a resilient water supply for Arizona through federal funding and additional support.

Key points made during the discussion included:

- A major challenge is the escalated speed at which Colorado River conditions are declining, which creates challenges and uncertainty for utilities to prepare.
- Municipal water providers are already efficiently using every drop. They can be part of the solution for the Colorado River, but all users in all sectors throughout the Colorado River Basin will need to step up for a whole solution.
- The need to access the available federal funds promptly by limiting regulatory and bureaucratic hurdles.
- Ensuring that more funds will be available to help upgrade and expand infrastructure needs.
- Inflation and supply chain issues are significantly impacting utilities.
- Enhanced conservation measures will continue to be a priority.
- Everyone across the Valley and Arizona will be impacted by the Colorado River situation, regardless of how much Colorado River water they can access.

The passing of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Water Resources Development Act, and funding for drought resiliency in the Inflation Reduction Act by the Federal Government in 2021 and 2022 are providing important funds for improvements and upgrades to water systems in Arizona and across the West. However, everyone in attendance recognized that while those

funds are a good start, they will not be enough for developing projects needed as we prepare for less Colorado River water.

The Valley cities understand the importance of working together for solutions. Senator Sinema reiterated the importance of collaboration, stating that we will fail or succeed together.

Other key points made by Senator Sinema included:

- Arizona's economic growth and prosperity depend on strengthening our state's water supply. The historic drought conditions that we are facing threaten the health and safety of Arizona's communities and our livelihoods.
- We need to secure our water future.
- Arizona has always been willing to do more than our fair share, and we must keep working together, understanding that our success depends on each other.
- The management of the Colorado River depends on real leadership. And it demands compromise. Everyone has to give for us to have a West that can grow.
- Remains confident that Arizona will continue to provide leadership.
- Encourages multiple municipalities to work together, which helps leverage access to federal funding by showing a regional perspective. They will have a better shot at gaining access to those dollars by teaming together.

Now more than ever, collaboration and cooperation are critical to the resiliency of the Valley and Arizona as we collectively face water challenges that are coming at a concerning pace. While last week's meeting was a step in the right direction, there is plenty of work to be done. Still, it was evident that the ten AMWUA cities and others represented at the table are willing to put in the work and step up to the plate to find solutions together, which will benefit the Valley, the State, and our national economy.

For over 50 years, 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.