



**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES**

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arizona heads into Tier 1 Colorado River Shortage for 2022

ADWR and CAP joint statement in response to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's first-ever declaration of a Colorado River Shortage

Phoenix, Arizona (August 16, 2021) – The Colorado River Basin continues to experience drought and the impacts of hotter and drier conditions. Based on the Jan. 1 projected level of Lake Mead at 1,065.85 feet above sea level, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior has declared the first-ever Tier 1 shortage for Colorado River operations in 2022.

This Tier 1 shortage will result in a substantial cut to Arizona's share of the Colorado River -- about 30% of Central Arizona Project's normal supply; nearly 18% of Arizona's total Colorado River supply; and less than 8% of Arizona's total water use. Nearly all the reductions within Arizona will be borne by Central Arizona Project (CAP) water users. In 2022, reductions will be determined by Arizona's priority system – the result will be less available Colorado River water for central Arizona agricultural users.

While Arizona will take the required mandatory reductions under a Tier 1 shortage, the reductions to CAP water users will be partially mitigated by resources that have been set aside in advance for this purpose.

"The 2019 Drought Contingency Plan put in place agreements and Arizona water users have taken collective action to mitigate reduced CAP water for affected municipalities, tribes and CAP agriculture," said Ted Cooke, general manager, Central Arizona Project. "These DCP near-term actions will provide relief from reductions that will occur in 2022 as a result of a Tier 1 shortage."



Given the recent intensification of the drought, deeper levels of shortage are likely in the next few years. As impacts of drought persist, additional reductions to CAP water users are likely to occur pursuant to the DCP. Such reductions would include impacts to CAP water currently available to some central Arizona municipalities and tribes.

The near-record low runoff in the Colorado River in 2021 significantly reduced storage in Lake Powell. The reduction in storage, combined with projections for future months, has triggered provisions of the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan designed to protect critical elevations in Lake Powell and Lake Mead through additional collective actions.

“ADWR and CAP are working collaboratively with Arizona stakeholders and the Basin States to deploy more adaptive measures consistent with the Drought Contingency Plan and associated agreements,” said Tom Buschatzke, director, [Arizona Department of Water Resources](#). “At the same time, ADWR and CAP will continue to work with partners within Arizona and across the Basin to develop and implement longer-term solutions to the shared risks we all face on the Colorado River now and into the future.”

Buschatzke continued, “We in Arizona have acted and will continue to act to protect the water resources of our state and of the Colorado River system overall.”

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About Arizona Department of Water Resources

The Arizona Department of Water Resources safeguards the health, safety and economic welfare of the public by protecting, conserving and enhancing Arizona’s water supplies in a bold, thoughtful and innovative manner.

About Central Arizona Project

Central Arizona Project (CAP) is Arizona’s single largest resource for renewable water supplies. CAP is designed to bring water from the Colorado River to Central and Southern Arizona every year. More than 80% of the state’s population live in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties, where CAP water is delivered. It is a 336-mile long system of aqueducts, tunnels, pumping plants and pipelines. www.CentralArizonaProject.com