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PRESS STATEMENT

Statement from ADWR Director Tom Buschatzke and CAP General Manager Ted Cooke in response to the U.S. Department of the Interior announcement of actions to protect the Colorado River system and 2023 Operating Conditions for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Since Commissioner Touton's Senate testimony in June, Arizona has been working hard with the Basin States and Reclamation to identify actions that would take the necessary critical steps to conserve an additional 2-4 million acre-feet (MAF) to protect the Colorado River system.

The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and the Central Arizona Project (CAP) came to the table prepared to take significant additional reductions beyond those required under the 2007 Guidelines and the Drought Contingency Plan with the expectation that others would need to do likewise, as no one state can do it alone.

Arizona and Nevada put forward an aggressive proposal that would achieve 2 MAF of reductions among the Lower Basin and Mexico in 2023 and beyond. That proposal was rejected.

Discussions among the Basin States and the United States have only led to a framework relying entirely on short-term, voluntary contributions for 2023 that fall far short of the water volumes needed to protect the system.

The Basin States have not yet produced a viable plan nor has the United States proposed a plan that achieves the protection volumes identified by the Commissioner.

Achieving volumes at this magnitude will take significant contributions by all water users in the Colorado River Basin.

Arizona already has demonstrated its commitment by leaving 800,000 acre-feet in Lake Mead in the current year alone. Since 2014, Arizona has left more than 2.5 MAF, equating to approximately 37 feet of increased elevation in Lake Mead.

It is unacceptable for Arizona to continue to carry a disproportionate burden of reductions for the benefit of others who have not contributed.

Arizona is committed to work toward a comprehensive plan that assures protection of the system through equitable contributions from all water users.