



SOUTHERN NEVADA
WATER AUTHORITY

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**U.S. Department of the Interior and Western municipal water suppliers
developing water conservation projects as part of a landmark
collaborative agreement**

Basin municipalities and federal government take action to protect the Colorado River

Faced with the increasing probability of shortage on the Colorado River, municipal water providers in Arizona, California, Nevada and Colorado, and the Bureau of Reclamation are implementing a landmark Colorado River System Conservation program.

Beginning today, Reclamation is soliciting water conservation project proposals from Colorado River entitlement holders in Arizona, California, and Nevada. At a later date, water users in the Upper Basin will be invited to participate in this unique agreement.

Central Arizona Project, Denver Water, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Southern Nevada Water Authority and Reclamation are providing up to \$11 million to fund new Colorado River water conservation projects. The projects are intended to demonstrate the viability of cooperative, voluntary projects to reduce demand for Colorado River water. The program is soliciting project proposals from agriculture, and municipal and industrial Colorado River water entitlement holders.

“This partnership demonstrates our commitment to find solutions in meeting the future challenges we face in water supply and demand,” said Reclamation’s Lower Colorado Regional Director Terry Fulp. “Our goal is to put in place a suite of proactive, voluntary measures that will

reduce our risk of reaching critical reservoir levels. This pilot program is a good first step toward reaching that goal and, depending upon its success, could be expanded in the future.”

For more than a decade, a severe drought unprecedented in the last 100 years has gripped the Colorado River, reducing water levels in storage reservoirs throughout the Basin and increasing the risk of falling to critically low water levels. In July, reservoir levels in Lake Mead dipped to the lowest level since Hoover Dam was filled in 1937.

“A decade ago, municipal and agricultural agencies in California came together to help the state permanently reduce its use of Colorado River water. The goal of this latest effort is to develop new basin-wide partnerships to expand conservation activities during this historic drought for the benefit of all Colorado River water users,” said Jeffrey Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

"With shortage looming on the Colorado River, CAP, with its partners, is taking immediate steps to protect Arizona's Colorado River supply. The goal of this unique program is to develop new conservation programs from municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users from across the seven states which share the river," said Pam Pickard, Board President, Central Arizona Project. "The program saves water in Lake Mead and Lake Powell for the benefit of all Colorado River water users and promotes a healthy river system."

All water conserved under this program will stay in the river system, helping to boost the declining reservoir levels and protecting the health of the entire river system. The municipal agencies and the federal government agree that collaborative action is needed now, to reduce the risk to water supplies, hydropower production, water quality, agricultural output, and recreation and environmental resources across the entire Colorado River basin. The Colorado River and its tributaries provide water to nearly 40 million people for municipal use, and the combined metropolitan areas served by the Colorado River represent the world's 12th largest economy, generating more than \$1.7 trillion in Gross Metropolitan Product per year.

This first call for proposals is for Lower Basin parties. Upper Basin proposals will be requested in the future.

“We are pleased to see the momentum established in the lower basin. We look forward to a similar process starting soon in the upper basin with our partners along the Colorado River, including The Colorado Cattlemen’s Association, Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado River District, Southwestern Water Conservation District, The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited. Together, we will identify and fund pilot programs that demonstrate the viability of cooperative, voluntary compensated means to reduce water demand," said Jim Lochhead, CEO Denver Water.

Reclamation is currently requesting project proposals for 2015 and 2016 funding allocations. The due date for the responses to the solicitation is November 17, 2014. Following the two-year period, Reclamation and the municipal agencies will evaluate the effectiveness of the conservation projects funded by this program and determine if the successful programs could be expanded or extended to provide even greater protection for the Colorado River system.

"Managing the Colorado River requires a cooperative and concerted effort between diverse stakeholders, and this pilot program furthers that collaboration and provides another tool we can use in response to the drought," said John Entsminger, General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority. "This program is the mechanism for developing a wide array of adaptable and scalable conservation projects to provide real benefit to the overall river system."

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