

## FACT SHEET

# Drought Contingency Plan

Arizona Implementation

### WHAT IS THE DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN (DCP)?

DCP is a set of agreements designed to protect the Colorado River system through voluntary reductions and increased conservation. The agreements were developed through a collaborative process amongst the federal government, states, water users and Mexico. The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and Central Arizona Project (CAP) were the participants from Arizona.

There is an Upper Basin DCP involving: Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and the U.S.; a Lower Basin DCP involving Arizona, California, Nevada and the US; and a companion agreement which connects these two programs and links them to Mexico through a U.S.-Mexico agreement.

### HOW WAS ARIZONA'S DCP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN DEVELOPED

In 2018 and early 2019, ADWR and CAP jointly led nearly 40 stakeholders through months of public and small group meetings. During this process, new arrangements, which form a package called the Arizona DCP Implementation Plan, were negotiated. The package of agreements shares the burden of impacts from Colorado River reductions and the benefits of increased reliability for Arizona water users.

### WHY DID ARIZONA PARTICIPATE IN DCP?

Arguably, Arizona (and CAP specifically) had the most to lose because of its junior priority on the Colorado River, which means its supply is cut first, and most, during times of shortage. There was also uncertainty about what would happen if Lake Mead, the Lower Basin's principal reservoir, dipped to the very lowest levels. Arizona participated in DCP in order to reduce this risk by sharing reductions with other states and Mexico.

### DOES DCP PREVENT THE COLORADO RIVER SYSTEM FROM EXPERIENCING SHORTAGE?

DCP does not prevent a Colorado River shortage, but thanks to Arizona's innovative water management programs, conservation and collaborative long-term planning, Arizona will continue to enjoy reliable water supplies. With DCP and Arizona's water management framework, we are prepared to handle the effects of drought and Colorado River shortage.

### WHEN DID DCP START?

The Drought Contingency Plan Authorization Act was signed into law on April 16, 2019. Reductions to Arizona's Colorado River supply under DCP began in 2020. The DCP agreements run through 2026. It is anticipated that new rules will be negotiated and put into effect after 2026.

### WHY WAS DCP NECESSARY?

DCP addresses the changing hydrology in the Colorado River Basin. In 2007 when the current Guidelines were adopted, the risks from prolonged drought were understated. Additional measures were necessary to prevent the reservoirs from falling to critically low levels.

DCP is a "sharing of risks" and a "sharing of opportunity." For Arizona, DCP provides a greater certainty for reliable and secure water supplies now and in the future.

Risk of Lake Mead going below  
**1,025'** by the year **2026**

(from June 2018 BOR data, at the time of DCP discussions)



Without DCP



With DCP

**YOUR WATER. YOUR FUTURE.**

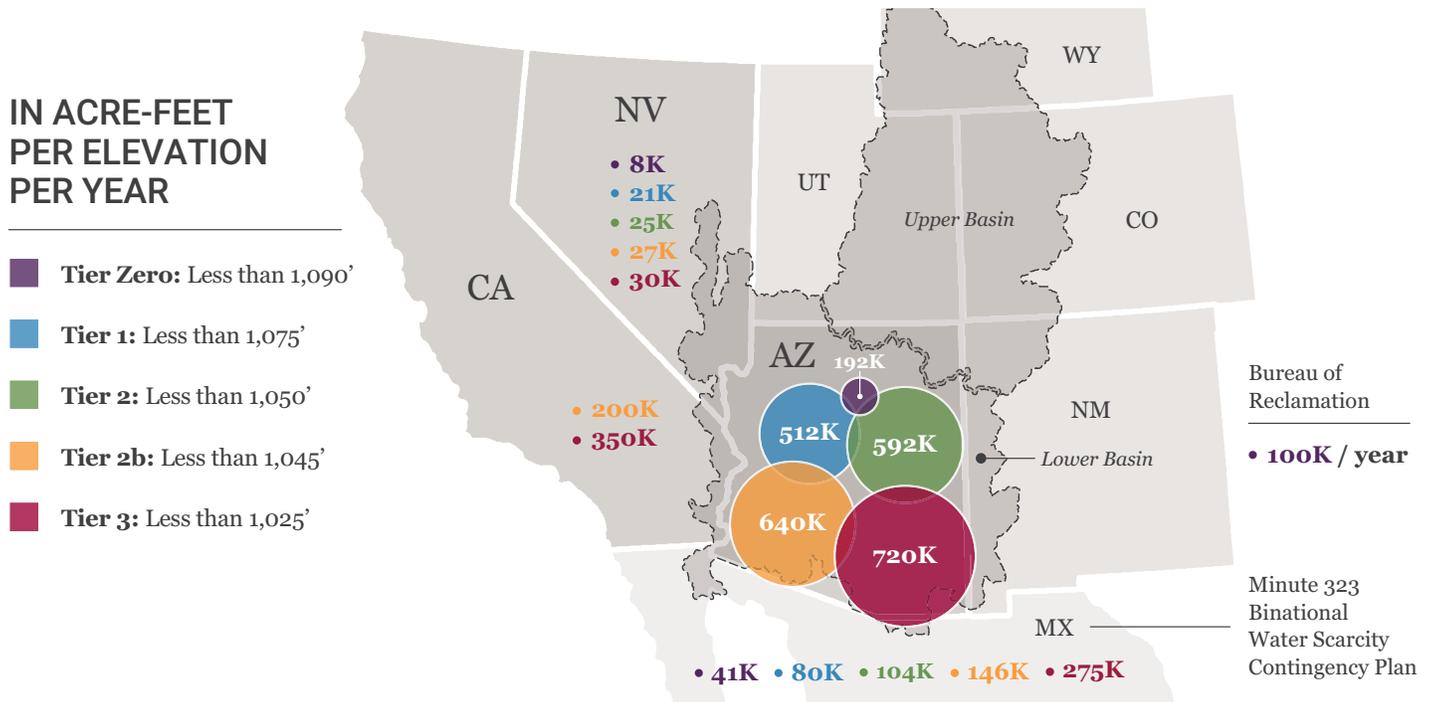
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## YOU SHOULD KNOW...

- A Colorado River water shortage does not mean that Arizona is in a water crisis.
- Arizona leads the nation with rigorous water conservation and sustainability laws that protect Arizona water users.
- The DCP provides a plan for how Arizona cities, agricultural users, industries, tribes and others will share Colorado River water supplies during shortages, while honoring the existing priority system.

## LOWER BASIN DCP CONTRIBUTIONS TO LAKE MEAD



## HOW HAS THE DCP PREPARED ARIZONA FOR SHORTAGE?

Arizona's DCP Implementation Plan represents the best of Arizona water management: collaboration, cooperation and innovation.

Arizona's DCP Steering Committee included about 40 representatives of tribes, cities, agriculture, developers, environmental organizations and elected officials. This Committee worked collectively to share the risks and benefits of the DCP.

The 2019 Drought Contingency Plan put in place agreements that resulted in collective action by Arizona's water users to share resources and mitigate the impacts of shortage. Some committed to leave extra water in Lake Mead to reduce future risks, while others shared water with those most severely impacted by shortage. As the impact of poor hydrology continues, the DCP is adaptive to respond to worsening conditions, buying time to identify additional actions as needs dictate.

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