

On January 7, Arizona Governor Doug Ducey began his second term. In his inaugural address, he declared: "I stand here today, with a heart full of gratitude, humility and a strong awareness of the responsibilities Arizonans have once again entrusted in me. Four years ago when I stood before you, our leaders had navigated us through the most challenging economic downturn of our lifetime.... Today, I'm proud to say, those days are behind us...." He also addressed Arizona's water future. "Our duty is to leave this state in far better shape than we found it – and we are well on our way.... When conversations stall, as they sometimes do during difficult discussions, we let history be our guide and the hand that lifts us back up."

The Governor continued, "Nearly four decades ago, in 1980, Arizona's accelerated water consumption forced a sobering ultimatum from the federal government: reform or suffer severe water cutbacks. The can could not be kicked any further. But Arizona's history is not one of missed opportunities or efforts that came up short. Rather we find, that in the darkest times, Arizona's pioneering spirit shines the brightest. Democrats and Republicans rose above party labels. They brought skeptical and reluctant stakeholders to the table. And they acted – and they did it with good faith and honest intentions. For the people in this crowd and many across our state, I don't have to spell out the parallel circumstances in which we find ourselves today. It's simple. Arizona and our neighboring states draw more water from the Colorado River than Mother Nature puts back. And with a critical shortfall imminent, we cannot kick the can any further. It's going to mean rising above self-interest and doing the right thing. It means taking the action our past and future generations demand."

Arizona faces reduced water deliveries if Lake Mead, the river's largest reservoir, reaches certain critically low levels. Arizona could lose access to up to 17% of its water allocation – equivalent to a year's worth of water for one million households – placing the issue at the forefront of Governor Ducey's legislative priorities. The Arizona legislature must act with urgency to ratify a voluntary Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) or face Reclamation's management of the diminishing water levels.

At the Colorado River Water Users' Association (CRWUA) annual meeting, December 13, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman called for completion of DCPs for the Colorado River Basin States. She said: "Last year, I stood here and asked the basin states to complete the DCPs by CRWUA, by today.... Over the last six months, the effort has been impressive and it is yielding results. In contrast, the latest hydrology information is sobering. Anyone who was hoping that a wet year would somehow bring us around...that's not something that's going to happen here. After experiencing the fourth driest year on record last year, Lake Powell and Mead's combined storage sits today at 46 percent. That is the lowest level since 1966 when Lake Powell was initially filling and cutting off water supplies down south.... We are teetering on the brink of a shortage today. We see real risk of rapid declines in reservoir elevations, particularly at Lake Mead, in the very near future. With the current Powell inflow forecast at just 66 percent of average, Lake Mead is projected to decline to below elevation 1050' in 2020.... We are quickly running out of time.... Today's level of risk is unacceptable. The chance for a crisis is far too high." (<https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/speech/detail.cfm?RecordID=1041>)

Commissioner Burman added, "On the positive side, I'd just say there's much to be encouraged about. The basin states and water districts worked throughout the summer to produce draft DCP agreements. You saw those published in October [2018].... I want to thank the basin leaders for the innovations and compromises that those agreements reflect. The basin came together on this one. In the Upper Basin, just yesterday [December 12, 2018] the four Upper Basin states, acting through the Upper Colorado River Commission, approved the DCPs and are ready to proceed.... They're ready to move forward as soon as the Lower Basin is ready to move forward. In the Lower Basin, Nevada is done. California and Arizona are not. I have seen remarkable progress in Arizona this year. Arizona is crafting a consensus solution to approving the DCP among the tribal, agricultural, municipal, and developer sectors. I want to be very sensitive to those ongoing negotiations. Reclamation has carefully worked to support all of the parties to help facilitate a consensus solution in Arizona. I won't stand here and praise or press any particular entity or group. If Arizona is able to come to consensus, there will be ample time to recognize those who were willing to step up, compromise, and contribute.... Close isn't done and we are not done...." Burman set a January 31, 2019 deadline for the Lower Basin to complete their DCPs or expect prompt federal action. (WSW Special Report #2327).

On January 14, in his State of the State Address, Governor Ducey called "...on state leaders to put party labels aside and do the 'things that matter' – securing our water future.... The issues we need to tackle aren't

partisan ones. In some cases, they aren't even political.... It's time to protect Lake Mead and Arizona. It's time to ratify the Drought Contingency Plan and we have 17 days to do it. Doing so will require compromise. No one stakeholder is going to get everything they want. Everyone is going to have to give. And I've been impressed by the willingness of those involved to do just that."

On January 15, Governor Ducey and legislative leaders committed to passing a drought contingency plan and reducing Colorado River water use following a 19-year drought. "With only 16 days to get a deal done before the federal government's deadline, Governor Doug Ducey today joined legislative leaders from both parties to announce a commitment to working together to pass the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP)." (<https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2019/01/governor-ducey-legislative-leaders-announce-commitment-passing-water-plan>)

Arizona Senate President Karen Fann, House Speaker Rusty Bowers, House Minority Leader Charlene Fernandez and Senate Minority Leader David Bradley, along with former Governor Bruce Babbitt, former U.S. Senator Jon Kyl, Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) Director Tom Buschatzke and Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) Executive Director Ted Cooke expressed a united front and showed bipartisan, intergenerational support for getting a deal done before January 31.

"Today, Arizona is committing to securing our water future - by passing the Drought Contingency Plan this month," said Governor Ducey. "If ever there was a time that we needed everyone to come together and act boldly and swiftly, it's now. Inaction will bring real and painful consequences and the clock is ticking. I'm grateful to Speaker Bowers, President Fann, Leaders Bradley and Fernandez, along with Governor Babbitt and Senator Kyl for joining me to pledge to get this done. There's no time to lose."

Ducey's 2018 budget committed \$6 million over three years to preserve elevations at Lake Mead with incentives for Arizona's Colorado River water users to forego a portion of their water supply. The Governor's 2020 Executive Budget includes an additional \$30 million for conservation efforts and \$5 million to support infrastructure projects for agriculture.