



March 19, 2019

INSERT ADDRESSEES

Dear _____

The designated representatives of the seven States of the Colorado River Basin collectively seek your support in promptly securing legislation to implement necessary actions in the Colorado River Basin in order to respond to the historic drought and ongoing dry conditions in the Basin.

The Colorado River provides water to approximately 40 million people and 5.5 million acres of irrigated agriculture in the Upper Basin (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming) and Lower Basin (Arizona, California and Nevada). Since 2000, the Basin has experienced historically dry conditions and combined storage in Lakes Powell and Mead has reached its lowest level since Lake Powell initially began filling in the 1960s. Last year's runoff into the Colorado River was the second lowest since 2000, and there is no sign that the trend of extended dry conditions will end any time soon even if 2019 provides above average runoff. Lakes Powell and Mead could reach critically low levels as early as 2021 if conditions do not significantly improve. Declining reservoirs threaten water supplies that are essential to the economy, environment, and health of the Southwestern United States.

Working together, the seven Basin States have developed drought contingency plans (DCPs) that are reflected in the agreements attached to this letter. We hereby request passage of federal legislation that would authorize and direct the Secretary of the Interior to sign and implement the agreements upon execution by the non-federal parties.

We look forward to working with you on legislation directing the Secretary of the Interior to implement the DCPs upon their execution by the Basin States and that refrains from granting any additional authority to the Secretary. Furthermore, the DCP agreements themselves reserve and recognize each party's existing rights and do not disturb the rights of other water users or stakeholders with interests in the Colorado River.

Federal legislation and subsequent implementation of the agreements will enable prompt action to enhance conservation of Colorado River water and provide us with water management tools necessary to address a looming crisis. These tools will assist us in reducing the probability that Lakes Powell and Mead will decline to critically low elevations. Our goal is to have authorizing legislation in place so that the seven Basin States can execute the drought contingency plan agreements no later than April 22, 2019.

Over the past quarter century, the seven Basin States have worked together to better manage and share the waters of the Colorado River. Each Basin State has its own unique considerations and challenges. Historic dry conditions and the resulting decline in water supply in each of the states has contributed and will likely continue to contribute to significant economic, environmental and other impacts throughout the Basin. We support regional, state and local stakeholders in ongoing efforts to obtain federal funding through existing or future programs to help address those impacts.

We appreciate your support in advancing federal legislation that would allow us to implement the DCPs upon our execution of those agreements. We stand ready to provide additional information and background on the need for and the benefits of the DCPs, and to further explain the need for immediate legislative action. We look forward to working with you in this critical effort.

Respectfully,

Thomas Buschatzke
Governor's Representative
State of Arizona

L. James Eklund
Governor's Representative
State of Colorado

Peter Nelson
Governor's Representative
State of California

John J. Entsminger
Governor's Representative
State of Nevada

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