



# Western States Water

## Addressing Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future

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### **WESTERN GOVERNORS/WATER RESOURCES**

#### **Arizona/Infrastructure**

On July 6, Arizona Governor Doug Ducey signed legislation (SB 1740) making an historic \$1B investment over three years to secure Arizona's water future, fulfilling a promise outlined during his State of the State address in January (see WSW #2489). "Today, we are taking a bold step to do what the men and women of Arizona hired us to do - position our state for success today, tomorrow and for generations to come," said Governor Ducey. "This legislation is crucial for our continued growth and prosperity. It will ensure Arizona remains a land of opportunity for families and for businesses large and small. As we've done over the past seven and a half years, we came together, brought everyone to the table and delivered for the people of this great state. And by doing so, we are leaving Arizona better and stronger than we found it.... It is because of all your efforts that this passed with overwhelming bipartisan support." The bill was sponsored by Senator Sine Kerr and Representative Gail Griffin.

The legislation takes an "all of the above" approach to address water supply for the next 100 years and fund projects that will bring additional water to the State. "As Arizona's population grows, the competition for water is fierce," said House Speaker Rusty Bowers. "An enhanced water-securing body is just what Arizonans need. With this forward-thinking water plan, we're adding new tools and resources to our toolbox to support our state's explosive growth."

SB 1740 appropriates more than \$1B to the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) and expands it with new responsibilities to provide loans and grants to water providers and entities for the purposes of importing water into Arizona, as well as encouraging new technologies. "We've been wise in our water conservation, efficiency and reuse projects, but now we need to go a step further," said Senate President Karen Fann. "Arizona's economy is booming and in order to sustain that growth, we need to look ahead. This water package does just that."

WIFA will continue to finance the design and construction of water and wastewater infrastructure

projects using federal and state funds. With the expansion, WIFA will pursue augmentation and conservation projects with a new board structure with members appointed jointly by the Arizona Legislature and Governor Ducey. "Challenges bring opportunity," said Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Tom Buschatzke. "This expansion of WIFA creates an opportunity for the state to secure its water future. I want to thank Governor Ducey, the Arizona Legislature and stakeholders for coming together to collaboratively come up with this important legislation."

SB 1740 gives WIFA additional authority and tools to be proactive in bringing in new water sources, which will allow the State to make significant investments in water conservation and innovative technologies such as desalination, as well as identify and develop new innovative long-term water sources. WIFA will administer additional funds for water augmentation, supply development, and conservation projects. WIFA will have the ability to acquire, store and sell new imported water, as well as engage in private-public partnerships to help enable these projects.

"Today we celebrate our action to address the water issues our great state faces," said Senator Kerr. "All Arizonans now and in the future will benefit from this legislation. Thanks to Governor Ducey's leadership and bipartisan legislative support, we are setting in motion a strong pathway toward securing future water sources." Rep. Griffin said, "This critical legislation just makes sense. It's fair and forward-looking. I'm glad we've come together to find a solution for our water future. Thank you to Governor Ducey, Speaker Bowers and President Fann for this collaborative effort."

### **WATER RESOURCES**

#### **Colorado/Agriculture**

On July 6, Governor Jared Polis (D-CO) visited agricultural producers to discuss how his administration is working to support farmers and ranchers and protect Colorado's water. Polis recently signed into law the Groundwater Compact Compliance Fund (SB22-028) and Modifications to Conservation District Grant Funds (SB22-195). SB22-028 creates a groundwater compact compliance sustainability fund to help finance

groundwater use reduction efforts in the Rio Grande and Republican River Basins. Measures include buying and retiring irrigation wells and acreage in these river basins, subject to the approval of the State Engineer. SB22-195 allows modifications to the Conservation District Grant Fund and requires an annual transfer of funds from the Colorado Department of Agriculture and State Treasury.

To help the Colorado agricultural industry mitigate the effects of the drought and improve the efficiency of agricultural water distribution systems, 21 grants totaling more than \$1.68M were awarded to agricultural businesses, tribal organizations, and watershed improvement projects. The funds were approved by the state legislature in 2021 (SB21-234). Les Owen, Conservation Division of the Colorado Department of Agriculture said: "As we continue to face the effects of climate change, drought mitigation and resiliency tactics are becoming a daily consideration for farmers and ranchers across Colorado. These Drought Resiliency grants, funded with Colorado Comeback recovery funds, are helping producers, conservation districts, and ag water users across our state to improve their water infrastructure and prepare for ongoing drought."

### **Colorado/Water Plan**

On June 30, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) released its draft of the 2023 Colorado Water Plan for a 90-day public comment period. The draft updates the first plan, released in 2015, which highlighted the importance of collaborative solutions to water challenges. The updated plan to be released in 2023 has four main focus areas: Vibrant Communities, Robust Agricultural, Thriving Watersheds, and Resilient Planning. This plan also focuses on tools and data to account for more drought resilience, climate change, and population growth.

According to the report, surface water accounts for 83% of total water use and groundwater 17%. Colorado's economy relies heavily on water as irrigation agriculture contributes \$47B and water-related recreation contributes \$19B. The plan also states that expected water shortages in 2050 are between 230,000 acre-feet and 740,000 acre-feet. The draft plan can be viewed here: <https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/CWCB/0/edoc/217373/ColoradoWaterPlanPublicReviewDraft.pdf>.

### **Oregon/Drought**

Governor Kate Brown (D-OR) declared a drought emergency for 17 counties, on June 7, including Klamath County. The legislature approved \$5M for the Department of Human Services for drought response. In Klamath County, the funds have been used to help

municipalities deliver 500-gallon tanks and weekly water to residents with dry wells. The solution is temporary, while well owners seek more permanent solutions to their water supply problems. For residents considering digging deeper wells, the legislature approved \$4M in December 2021 for well assistance to Klamath County residents, including reimbursement for 75% of the wells' costs.

### **MEETINGS**

#### **Water Reuse - 2022 State Summit Webinar Series**

On August 23, from 2:00-3:30 pm (EDT), the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) in collaboration with the Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA), Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), Groundwater Protection Council (GWPC), Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will host a webinar as part of the 2022 State Summit Webinar Series on Water Reuse. ASDWA and ECOS will provide a broad overview of Direct Potable Reuse (DPR) policy considerations at the national and state level. The webinar will then feature a panel that will share their states' different approaches to regulating and/or permitting DPR applications, highlight future focus areas, and encourage participants to share questions and concerns about DPR applications in their own state.

This webinar is the second in a series of water reuse webinars for States under the Water Reuse Action Plan (WRAP) Action 2.2, Enhancing State Collaboration on Water Reuse. The WRAP collaborative was launched in 2020 and helps drive progress on reuse by leveraging the expertise of partners across the country to create a more resilient water future for communities of all sizes. For more information, including how to register, see: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5641942032125786384>.

### **PEOPLE**

On July 14, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly appointed **Matt Unruh**, Assistant Director, Kansas Water Office (KWO) as an alternate member to the WSWC. Matt has been with the KWO since 2012. Prior to joining the KWO, Matt spent nearly 10 years at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment analyzing and working to address issues impacting the water and air quality of the State. A native of south-central Kansas, Matt received his undergraduate degree in geography from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and graduate degree in physical sciences from Emporia State University. We congratulate Matt on his appointment and look forward to working with him.

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