

GREG STANTON
ARIZONA'S 9TH DISTRICT

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

August 17, 2022

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The actions announced yesterday by the Department of the Interior to protect the Colorado River system fail in every possible way to meet the critical moment we face in the basin and to protect the river from collapse. I am deeply disappointed that your Administration chose to sit on the sidelines and contribute to collective inaction and urge that it treat this crisis with the level of seriousness it demands immediately. Without that, we risk catastrophe in the American Southwest.

Earlier this summer, the Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner sounded the alarm and made the case that 2-to 4-million-acre feet of additional conservation is necessary to protect critical water levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell. She pledged that if the basin states failed to reach an agreement about how to make these cuts, the agency was prepared to act. Yesterday's announcement proved that commitment hollow.

The cuts outlined yesterday were already mandated by the Drought Contingency Plan, which was signed into law in 2019, and are not factored into the additional steps necessary to protect critical water levels at the lakes.

The Department's failure to act as well as its failure to require all basin users to share the sacrifice to solve this crisis has created a significant state of uncertainty that pushes this delicate system closer to collapse. By continuing to kick the can down the road, the Department is doing a disservice to the system and endangering the southwest's socioeconomic viability.

It is imperative your Administration clearly and concisely lay out the actions it will take to reach the needed conservation absent a basin-wide agreement without delay.

Sincerely,

Greg Stanton
Member of Congress