

**Memorandum of Understanding  
by and among Colorado River Basin Municipal and Public Water Providers  
August 24, 2022**

Over the past two decades, the Colorado River basin has experienced the worst drought in the last 1,200 years, which has reduced storage levels in Lakes Powell and Mead to unprecedented and critical levels. Water users throughout the basin must reduce demands to bring supply and use back into balance.

For over 20 years, communities have adapted to persistent and intensifying drought and reduced water supplies by achieving significant efficiencies in water use through direct and indirect conservation programs, including improved technology for indoor water fixtures, changes to landscapes and watering practices, conservation-oriented rates and fees, reuse and recycling programs, marketing and education campaigns, and efficient land use and development policies. Yet, climate change and the resulting hydrological shifts we are experiencing require all water users in the basin to redouble our efforts to conserve our water resources.

Our customers have demonstrated their commitment to conserving our essential water resources by reducing per capita water use by the following amounts since 2000.

- Aurora Water – 36%
- Denver Water – 36%
- The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California – 33%
- Pueblo Water – 32%
- Southern Nevada Water Authority – 39%

Together, since 2000 we have decreased annual water use by 1,153,000 acre-feet while also adding 3.7 million people to our communities.

Much of this savings has been achieved through indoor and outdoor water use efficiencies. Recognizing that a clean, reliable water supply is critical to our communities, we can and must do more to reduce water consumption and increase reuse and recycling within our service areas. We pledge to be part of the solution.

Specifically, we commit to take the following actions:<sup>1</sup>

1. Continue and expand our programs to increase indoor and outdoor water use efficiency.
2. Introduce a program to reduce the quantity of non-functional turf grass by 30% through replacement with drought- and climate-resilient landscaping, while maintaining vital urban landscapes and tree canopies that benefit our communities, wildlife, and the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Water wholesalers, including The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, do not have regulatory authority over the use of water by end users and may only commit to develop incentive programs and model ordinance language to provide assistance to their Member Agencies in support of the phase out of non-functional turf within their service areas to help achieve this goal.

3. Increase water reuse and recycling programs where feasible, contingent on the dependability and security of our existing Colorado River supplies essential to support these efforts.
4. Implement best practices and sharing lessons learned to help one another accelerate our efficiency strategies. Water providers will select from the following approaches those tactics best tailored to preserve thriving communities, environmental health, and strong economies:
  - a. Transforming our outdoor landscapes and urban environments in a manner that improves climate resilience and promotes an ethic of wise water use through mandatory watering schedules and compliance enforcement, incentivized turf removal, and limitations on new turf;
  - b. Increasing efficiency of indoor fixtures and appliances;
  - c. Employing best practices for industrial processes and commercial operations, including minimization of evaporative cooling;
  - d. Adopting conservation-oriented rate structures to incentivize efficiency;
  - e. Accelerating water loss control by prioritizing supply considerations in asset management programs and exploring water loss control regulations to minimize water loss;
  - f. Improving coordination between land use and water planning efforts through improved processes, best management practices, and additional regulations, where appropriate; and
  - g. Employing other strategies tailored to the unique needs of each community.
5. Collaborate with other water users in the Colorado River basin to bring the supply and use of the river into balance. A robust agricultural economy, healthy watersheds, opportunities to recreate, and vibrant communities are all vital to our western way of life. No one sector, nor one state, can achieve sufficient use reductions independently. For the sake of current and future generations, we all must work together to achieve a balance of supply and use and thereby preserve a functioning and healthy river system.

Aurora Water  
Marshall Brown, General Manager

Denver Water  
James S. Lochhead, Chief Executive Officer

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern  
California Adel Hagekhalil, General Manager

Pueblo Water  
Seth Clayton, Executive Director

Southern Nevada Water Authority  
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