



Colorado River Indian Tribes Offer Large Supply of Water to Arizona's Drought Contingency Plan Providing Buffer for Lake Mead

(PARKER, AZ.) The Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) Tribal Council in western Arizona has offered the State of Arizona 50,000 acre feet of water a year for three years beginning in January 2020 to head off drought caused water shortages and help insure the state of Arizona in the Drought Contingency Planning while protecting the Colorado River. Currently, the state of Arizona is struggling as water levels continue to drop at Lake Mead.

The water from the CRIT offer, outlined in a November 9th letter to the Arizona Department of Water Resources and the Central Arizona Conservation District, would be stored in Lake Mead to help the State of Arizona and other Colorado River Basin states adopt the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan.

The Drought Contingency Plan was developed by all the Basin States in cooperation with Mexico to prevent Lakes Mead and Powell from dropping to such low levels that delivery of the water supply and power production are threatened.

CRIT Chairman Dennis Patch said, "We have been working with the state for the past two years to help protect the River and to help the State of Arizona to deal with the drought and shortages. The proposal we delivered today puts real numbers to that offer that are significant to getting the necessary approvals for DCP (Drought Contingency Plan)."

50,000 acre feet of water is enough water to supply 100,000 households for one year.

CRIT has the ability to assist Arizona because of its hard fought water rights to Colorado River water and its ability to fallow farm land when needed. CRIT holds the largest first priority water rights in Arizona for the use of Colorado River water. The proposal seeks \$250 for each acre-foot. The CRIT offer would not diminish Central Arizona Project supplies nor any other available water supplies in central Arizona.

The agreement would also generate new revenues the Tribal Council could use for key tribal programs and services.

Vice Chairman Keith Moses said, "We know our water is worth more than \$250 an acre-foot. We are making this proposal at this price for the benefit of the River and to move the process forward in Arizona for approval of the Drought Contingency Plan."

A much smaller agreement is already in place. Since 2016 CRIT has been making water available for System Conservation under the Reclamation sponsored pilot program. This proposal will use the same methods and build upon the success of the pilot program.

Leaving water in Lake Mead helps protect against more severe shortages and helps water users cope with the immediate cuts that will occur if the Drought Contingency Plan is approved. The Tribal Council believes the greater value for water users in Arizona will come with Congressional authorization to make a portion of CRIT's Colorado River allocation available for off reservation use in Arizona while still preserving CRIT's first priority rights.

A copy of CRIT's letter to the Arizona Department of Water Resources and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District is posted for your review.

About The Colorado River Indian Tribes:

The Colorado River Indian Tribes include four distinct Tribes - the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi and Navajo. There are currently about 4,434 Tribal members. The CRIT Reservation was created in 1865 by the Federal Government for "Indians of the Colorado River and its tributaries," originally for the Mohave and Chemehuevi, who had inhabited the area for centuries. People of the Hopi and Navajo Tribes were relocated to the reservation in later years. The reservation stretches along the Colorado River on both the Arizona and California side. It includes approximately 300,000 acres of land, with the river serving as the focal point and lifeblood of the area.