



August 19, 2021

The National Ground Water Association is the country's leading non-profit association representing water well contractors, groundwater scientists, engineers, and practitioners. We write you today concerning the immediate need for investment in aquifer recharge programs and aquifer storage and water re-use.

As you are surely aware, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced on August 16 its first ever water shortage declaration for Lake Mead and the Lower Colorado River Basin. This announcement will trigger a smaller amount of water distributed from Lake Mead and cuts to individual state water allocations. Arizona will be receiving an 18% reduction and Nevada will be receiving a reduction of 7% beginning January 2022.

While the water to be withdrawn from the Colorado River will decrease with the implementation of this notice, the demand for water in the American West has not. This demand will largely be filled by the expanded extraction of groundwater throughout the Colorado River region and even beyond. Should this increased extraction of groundwater not be managed adequately and without an appropriate aquifer recharge policy, our country could be faced with far larger water supply and food production issues.

Unfortunately, while this is the first ever declared water shortage of Colorado River Basin, there is no evidence to suggest it will be the last. And future shortage declarations could potentially see more drastic reductions in water distribution.

We are asking that you support the advancement of funding for groundwater recharge, aquifer storage, and water recycling and reuse programs as included in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*.

The act passed by the Senate contains valuable and much needed funding for these programs in the following sections:

- **Section 40902 Water Storage, Groundwater Storage, and Conveyance Projects** directs the Department of the Interior (DOI) to conduct feasibility studies for water storage, groundwater storage, and conveyance projects, and specifies a project approval process.
- **Section 40905 Competitive Grant Program for Large-Scale Water Recycling and Reuse Program** provides through the DOI a competitive grant program for Reclamation states for



large-scale water recycling and reuse projects based on feasibility studies and 25 percent federal cost share.

- **Section 40910 Federal Assistance for Groundwater Recharge, Aquifer Storage, and Water Source Substitution Projects** directs the DOI to offer technical and financial assistance and enter into agreements for groundwater recharge projects, aquifer storage and recovery projects, or water source substitution projects on a cost sharing basis.

Groundwater plays a vital role in supporting the western economy through agriculture and providing safe and clean drinking water for its growing communities. By properly funding groundwater management, we will be ensuring that this resource continues to serve the millions of people, businesses, and farms that count on it every day.

We urge you to support these important aspects of groundwater management and aquifer recharge as part of any infrastructure bill that is considered in the House of Representatives. We also feel there may be relevant cause for a hearing regarding the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's water shortage declaration and its impacts on western water supply. And any plans the Department of Interior or U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has to mitigate the impacts.

We will be reaching out to your office separately soon to hopefully arrange a meeting on the issue. If you have initial questions or comments, please reach out to NGWA Public Relations and Government Affairs Manager Ben Frech at [bfrech@ngwa.org](mailto:bfrech@ngwa.org).

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