

Senate Engrossed

State of Arizona
Senate
Fifty-first Legislature
Second Regular Session
2014

SENATE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 1001

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR TO
IMMEDIATELY TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES TO OPERATE THE YUMA DESALTING PLANT.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 To the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior:

2 Your memorialist respectfully represents:

3 Whereas, under a treaty agreement entered into in 1973, the United
4 States is required to ensure that water delivered to Mexico as part of
5 Mexico's allocation of Colorado River water meets certain water quality
6 standards; and

7 Whereas, in accordance with this agreement, the United States Congress
8 enacted the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974, which directed
9 and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to construct, operate and
10 maintain a desalting plant to treat drainage water from the Wellton-Mohawk
11 Irrigation and Drainage District and deliver the treated water to Mexico; and

12 Whereas, construction of the Yuma Desalting Plant was completed in
13 1992; and

14 Whereas, the Yuma Desalting Plant is capable of treating 100,000
15 acre-feet of water annually; and

16 Whereas, except for limited, initial operations in 1993, a
17 demonstration run completed in 2007 and a nine-month pilot run completed in
18 2011, the federal government has failed to operate the Yuma Desalting Plant
19 for most of its 30 years of existence; and

20 Whereas, the Department of the Interior is using 100,000 acre-feet of
21 water from Lake Mead to fulfill its water quality obligations to Mexico,
22 rather than conserving an equivalent amount of water through the operation of
23 the Yuma Desalting Plant; and

24 Whereas, the Colorado River system is in its 14th consecutive year of
25 drought; and

26 Whereas, as a result of these drought conditions, the Department of the
27 Interior is projecting that a shortage on the Colorado River is increasingly
28 likely, with the probability that the shortage will exceed 50% in 2017; and

29 Whereas, the Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study
30 released by the Bureau of Reclamation in December 2012 concluded that there
31 will be a future imbalance between the supply and demand for Colorado River
32 water and cited measures such as water conservation, reuse and augmentation
33 to stave off future shortages on the Colorado River; and

34 Whereas, the Central Arizona Project is a junior priority rights holder
35 to Colorado River water and would bear the largest reduction of Colorado
36 River water in times of shortage; and

37 Whereas, by abdicating its obligation to operate the Yuma Desalting
38 Plant, the federal government has caused the loss of more than 1,300,000
39 acre-feet from Lake Mead, placing the State of Arizona at increased risk of
40 water shortage; and

41 Whereas, if the federal government were to operate the Yuma Desalting
42 Plant, it would conserve 100,000 acre-feet per year, equivalent to the water
43 needed to supply more than 250,000 Arizona homes with water annually.

1 Wherefore your memorialist, the Senate of the State of Arizona, the House of
2 Representatives concurring, prays:
3 1. That the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior
4 immediately take all necessary measures to operate the Yuma Desalting Plant.
5 2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies
6 of this Memorial to the President of the United States, the President of the
7 United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of
8 Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.