



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona State Legislature

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

---

Thursday, April 16, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Arizona Republicans Share Colorado River Solutions Directly with Trump Administration

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – Arizona House and Senate Republican leaders are taking action to protect the Colorado River, meeting with federal officials in the Trump administration this week to propose urgent solutions that could help save the entire river system ahead of imminent water management decisions.

House Speaker Steve Montenegro and Senate President Warren Petersen led the meeting, joined by Senate President Pro Tempore T.J. Shope, Senator Tim Dunn, and Representative Gail Griffin. They met with U.S. Department of Interior Assistant Secretary Andrea Travnicek and Bureau of Reclamation Acting Commissioner Scott Cameron and urged the federal government to utilize the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956 to release water from reservoirs in the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico to protect hydropower generation and prevent dead pool.

**“Lake Mead and Lake Powell are running dangerously low, at just 25% to 33%, while reservoirs in the Upper Basin are nearly full, between 82% and 97%,”** said Speaker Montenegro. **“It is clearly evident from the dire situation that the water sitting upstream must be released so it can flow downstream to Lake Powell.”**

**“The seven basin states are facing a real crisis, and it’s going to take bold action to fix it,”** said President Petersen. **“We need serious investment in water infrastructure and major projects that can actually move the needle. The Trump administration is the most qualified and competent partner to get this done, unlike any prior administration, and we’re confident that together we can save the Colorado River system.”**

Republican leaders outlined both immediate actions and long-term strategies to stabilize the river system, including \$1 billion in federal funds per year for the duration of any future agreement to compensate Colorado River users for voluntary conservation. Their proposal, which would be open to all seven states and Mexico that use Colorado River water, utilizes a ‘reverse auction’ format to maximize the amount of water saved per dollar, rather than setting a fixed price per acre-foot.

**“We must fund conservation at scale and use every authority available to help stabilize the system before we hit a breaking point,”** said Senator Dunn. **“The voluntary conservation concept is a simple yet innovative solution that maximizes water savings while preserving existing priority rights. Other compensation programs, such as ‘Intentionally Created Surplus,’ served a purpose previously but should be approached with caution. They have raised a lot of issues in the past and could lead to concerns in the future, which would not be ideal.”**

Long-term solutions included dedicated federal funding to support the construction of new long-term water augmentation projects that could create new water supplies for everyone, such as a “[Great Big Beautiful Dam](#)” or a desalination project.

**“We want to support President Trump and deliver a major win for Arizona and the entire Southwest,”** said Representative Griffin. **“Republican lawmakers are advancing real solutions—including voluntary conservation, new storage infrastructure, recharge basins, advanced reuse technology, and large-scale desalination—that will increase water supplies for everyone and secure the future of the Colorado River for decades to come. President Trump has a real opportunity to act on these projects and leave a lasting legacy for himself and the entire western United States.”**

House and Senate leaders also urged the federal agencies to use President Trump’s existing emergency declarations to provide critical resources to help address the poor hydrological projections, including a National Energy Emergency issued in January 2025 that included the kinetic movement of water for hydroelectric power.

**“President Trump has recognized the importance of energy resources in the West,”** said Senator Shope. **“We are hopeful that his federal agencies will use all available tools to bring President Trump's vision to fruition. We continue to work with our Congressional Delegation and believe we are well positioned to partner with the Trump administration to deliver meaningful result for Arizona and the West.”**

###

**For more information, contact:**

Andrew Wilder  
Director of Communications | Arizona House Republican Caucus  
[awilder@azleg.gov](mailto:awilder@azleg.gov)

Kim Quintero  
Director of Communications | Arizona Senate Republican Caucus  
[kquintero@azleg.gov](mailto:kquintero@azleg.gov)