

Beyond the Colorado River: Is an International Water Augmentation Consortium in Arizona's Future?

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ABSTRACT

This analysis thoroughly reviews the water resources of the State of Arizona. A per capita water demand is assigned for each of the state's 15 counties based on population projections. This information is then compared to the available water supplies for each county to produce a timeline that illustrates when the present water supplies will be completely utilized.

What are the options for the next bucket of water after present supplies are used up? Where will the new supply come from to support the population growth that cannot be stopped? After analyzing the pros and cons of possible solutions to the coming water shortage, the chosen solution would work in concert with the Arizona-Sonora Commission and involve an exchange with Mexico for their 1.5 maf of Colorado River water at Morelos Dam to be replaced by desalted water from the Gulf of California: a potential win-win relationship for both countries. This plan would include the establishment of an Arizona Water Authority that would have 1) a governance board approved by Governor with concurrence of the Legislature, 2) taxing and bonding authority, and 3) authority to oversee transmission of the Colorado River water through new systems (in northern Arizona) and existing systems (in Cochise County) and a joint delivery through the Central Arizona Project to Harquahala a new system to Pinal County.

This solution could take Arizona well into the 21st century; it could be our new 100-year water supply.