



Investing in Water Security

January 2022

As the Legislature and Governor's office contemplate large-scale investments in water infrastructure, and with potential to match federal dollars from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, **Arizona has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make high impact investments in water sustainability to support communities, tribes, rivers, farmers and ranchers, and businesses across the state.**

As part of a smart, statewide approach to investing in water sustainability, below are categories of projects and opportunities that the state legislature should consider in making funding decisions. Tribal and non-tribal entities should be considered for state funding for water projects.

Statewide Conservation

- System conservation at Lake Mead (emphasis on water conservation projects that save water long-term or at least for multiple years)
- Financial support for implementing voluntary landowner agreements that conserve land and water

Municipal and Industrial Conservation

- HOA and other large landscape irrigation assistance programs, irrigation technology rebates, turf removal rebates
- Industrial water conservation (cooling tower assistance programs and water conservation technology rebates/ assistance)
- Residential water conservation programs (water checkup programs to help residents save water on landscapes and in homes, plumbing rebates, grass removal rebates)
- Incentives and rebates for rainwater collection systems
- Water loss control (efforts of water utilities to provide accountability in their operation by auditing their water systems and implementing controls to minimize water losses)
- Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) water meters (can provide real-time leak detection)

Agricultural Conservation

- Projects that lead to reductions in overall on-farm water use, with resulting water savings benefiting the system
- Crop-switching efforts to reduce consumptive water use, along with supporting the development of markets and processing options for less water-intensive crops
- Irrigation upgrades that result in overall on-farm water use reductions
- Soil health protection including incentives for cover crops and other soil preservation techniques

Water Reuse and Recycling

- Sewering and septic conversion projects where reclaimed water can be reused or recharged into aquifer

- Regional wastewater treatment plants in rural areas
- Local water reuse and recycling projects
- Direct potable reuse projects, including acceleration of ADEQ regulations to help streamline project approvals

Watershed Management

- Invasive plant removal (e.g. salt cedar) and replacement with native vegetation that improves river health and supports wildlife
- Forest health and watershed protection efforts
- Prioritizing high risk areas critical for protecting rural community water supplies
- Incentives and support for soil health protection on rangelands
- Post-fire assessments and restoration to mitigate flood risk

Physical Infrastructure

- Stormwater and groundwater recharge projects, especially those that are multi-benefit, create habitat, or add water to a floodplain aquifer that restores or enhances river flow
- Localized and neighborhood-level stormwater capture and recharge projects incorporating green infrastructure design principles
- Upgrading existing urban and agricultural water infrastructure to reduce water losses—canal lining, upgrading/ fixing existing pipes to minimize leaks
- Raising Bartlett Dam to increase reservoir capacity pending environmental and cultural considerations
- Restoring discontinued streamgages that collect flow data and are vital to managing surface water resources
- Expanding groundwater monitoring network

Take a Holistic, Statewide Approach

Smart investments in water sustainability that benefit all of Arizona will require many, distributed multi-benefit projects, and the planning needed to implement them; not single, silver bullet solutions. In addition, to maximize the benefits of public investments in water infrastructure, the legislature should pair water infrastructure with sound water policy reforms that address underlying water problems in the state. We cannot justify expensive public investments in water infrastructure if we have not done all that we can to manage and use the water we do have wisely. The Water for Arizona Coalition urges lawmakers to take a visionary, statewide approach to water spending coupled with needed policy reforms.

The Water for Arizona Coalition is comprised of Arizonans who support policies and innovative practices to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state's needs. Collectively, we have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunter, angler, business, and outdoor recreation partners around the state. Learn more at: waterforarizona.com.

