

Water for Arizona Coalition
Funding for ADWR Factsheet, January 17, 2020

The Water for Arizona Coalition (WAC) seeks additional General Fund dollars to support the Department of Water Resources and its mission. ADWR suffered deep budget cuts following the Great Recession that continue to constrain the agency's operations and, perhaps more importantly, its ability to ensure long-term, reliable water supplies to support Arizona's communities and economy – from all sources - Colorado River water, groundwater and Arizona surface water.

Arizona is already feeling the effects of a strapped ADWR. [Reports](#) from the state auditor show that due to a lack of funding, ADWR is less able to fulfill its responsibilities related to managing groundwater and issuing reports that track water conservation. This is a troubling prospect: a recent series in the Arizona Republic highlighted the challenges surrounding excessive groundwater pumping in rural Arizona and illustrated the acute need for acquiring and compiling supply and demand information about water resources throughout the state.

Without these analyses, it's nearly impossible for communities, farmers and ranchers, and families that depend on groundwater to plan for their water future. Today ADWR is over a decade late in completing several plans to help the state prevent long-term water declines and better manage groundwater resources.

WAC seeks this funding:

- **\$10 million in General Fund to pay ADWR staff, not new FTE's:** This problem is far more serious than just adding additional staff back to ADWR's roster. Hiring -- and retaining -- the kind of experts that ADWR needs requires significant resources. ADWR and Director Tom Buschatzke need additional General Fund dollars to attract, hire and retain groundwater modelers, engineers and other water professionals. ADWR must be able to offer a competitive salary and benefits to attract and retain the talent and expertise that Arizona needs to protect our limited water supplies.
- Only as a measure of the funding shortage, ADWR was funded for 231 FTE's in 2008 and is now funded for 145 – an 86 person cut.
- **\$3 million in General Fund to assess rural Groundwater Basins:** DWR needs to create a numerical model for the six at-risk groundwater basins including three La Paz County groundwater basins at risk – Butler Valley, McMullen Valley and Renegras Plain; and to refresh the Harquahala Basin numerical model from 2012 in order to advise the legislature how much water is in the basin and whether withdrawal will harm the adjacent Butler Valley basin.
- **\$1.5 million in General Fund for the Adjudications:** In order to speed up the long-standing adjudications Arizonans need an additional, full time Superior Court judge devoted to this important work and additional ADWR technical staff that advises the courts.
- **\$18 million in General Fund for the WQARF "State Superfund" Cleanup program:** This program conducts cleanup of contaminated groundwater across Arizona and this water provides Arizona its emergency supply of water in times of severe drought.

The Water for Arizona Coalition is a community of Arizonans who support innovative practices and smart policies to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state's needs. Organizational support is provided by solution-oriented groups like American Rivers, Audubon Arizona, Business for Water Stewardship, Environmental Defense Action Fund, and Western Resource Advocates that collectively have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts across the state. Kevin Moran, a longtime Arizonan and former government relations consultant, is the Chairman of the Coalition.

