



ADWR and ADEQ Funding Factsheet

Water for Arizona Coalition | March 29, 2021

The Water for Arizona Coalition (WAC) seeks additional General Fund dollars for the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to support planning, protection, and long-term stewardship of our water resources. ADWR and ADEQ suffered deep budget cuts following the Great Recession that continue to constrain the agencies' operations and, perhaps more importantly, their ability to ensure long-term, safe, and reliable water supplies to support Arizona's economy—this includes water supplies from all sources, including the Colorado River, groundwater, and Arizona's in-state rivers.

Arizona is already feeling the effects of a strapped ADWR. The most recent report from the state auditor showed 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: in 2019, *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 funding to support ADWR and ADEQ:

- **\$5 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. And ADWR must be able to offer competitive salary and benefits packages to attract and retain the talent and expertise Arizona needs to protect our limited water supplies.
 - Less than HALF of the current employees at ADWR have more than five years of experience at the Department.
 - ADWR is currently operating with two-thirds of its appropriated pre-recession staff.
- **\$2.9 million in General Fund for the Adjudications:** In order to speed up the long-standing General Stream Adjudications, the courts and ADWR need additional capacity dedicated to this important work. We need a full-time adjudication judge, support staff for the courts, and ADWR technical staff to advise the courts to spur on this long-stalled process. Additional funds to support the University of Arizona law clinic to provide pro bono legal assistance to small water right claimants would help water users navigate the General Stream Adjudication process to determine their water rights.
- **\$18 million in General Fund for the WQARF "State Superfund" Cleanup program:** This program conducts cleanup of contaminated groundwater across the state providing Arizona its emergency supply of water in times of severe drought.

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.

