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Federal Government Releases Dire New Colorado River Projections, Underscoring Need for Action

The new projections, which come shortly after the first-ever Tier 1 water shortage declaration at Lake Mead, indicate a high likelihood that water levels will decline even further in the coming years.

PHOENIX - Today, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released [new projections](#) for Colorado River reservoir conditions, which demonstrate an increased possibility that Lake Mead could fall into a Tier 2 or Tier 3 shortage in the coming years.

In response to the study, the [Water for Arizona Coalition](#) issued the following statement:

“Just a month ago, the first-ever declaration of a Tier 1 water shortage at Lake Mead for 2022 placed the challenges facing Arizona and the West in stark relief. Today, additional data shows a marked increase in the risk that water levels could fall even further within the next five years.

“The new projections reinforce what we already know: Climate change and aridification are permanently changing our landscapes, threatening our way of life, jeopardizing our ability to produce hydropower and placing further strain on our communities. This is the reality every Arizonan is facing. The possibility of severe declines at Lakes Mead and Powell should be a wake up call to anyone who wants their children or grandchildren to be able to survive and thrive in the West.

“The possible outcomes for Lake Powell and Lake Mead signal a paradigm shift in basin conditions, and Arizonans urgently need our policies and management of water resources to keep up as we continue to rely on the Colorado River and groundwater supplies. That means pursuing [common sense conservation and resilience strategies](#) in the near term to manage our water resources more effectively. We also must now fully manage our whole water supply portfolio as the Colorado River shrinks, including protecting and managing groundwater across our state. Those approaches and other tools can manage some current impacts, but without immediate action in Congress to lead and address the climate crisis, we may face the limits of what climate adaptation can achieve in the Southwest. In this new era of aridification in the Colorado River Basin, climate leadership is water leadership.”

About the Water for Arizona Coalition

[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. The Coalition was recently recognized as an Arizona Capitol Times "2020 Leader of the Year" for their efforts in protecting Arizona's most valuable resource. 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.

