

Save the River

Ver 1.1

August 26, 2022



Who We Are

- We are a broad coalition of farmers and agri-business leaders from along the Colorado River who ***voluntarily*** came together to address the imminent water crisis we face.
- Together, we grow and provide fresh vegetables to North America during the winter months, ***reliably feeding hundreds of millions of people.***
- As pioneering stewards, we proactively lead innovative efforts to grow more crops using less water.
- We are leading the save the river effort and inspiring others, but it will require participation from everyone if we hope to make a difference.



Innovation and Investment in Water Conservation

- *Over the past several decades Yuma area farmers have invested millions in irrigation techniques that resulted in enhanced water conservation.*
- This includes significant investments in land leveling, improving delivery systems, and purchasing sprinkler and drip equipment. With these investments, farmers have been proactive in conserving water in the most environmentally friendly manner possible.
- Yuma agriculture is engaged in a partnership with the University of Arizona's Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture, providing funding and resources for agricultural research.
 - A study with the U of A's Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture found that over a 40-year-period since 1975, ***Yuma farmers doubled yields, doubled acres of crop grown, increased economic value 700% and reduced water usage 15-18%.***
 - Yuma agriculture achieved this by implementing 90% efficient irrigation, leveraging new tools and techniques, and utilizing arid lands winter-centric cropping patterns.

The Time for Solutions is Now



- The Southwestern United States is currently facing the worst drought in over 1,200 years - and the end is indeterminate.
- The drought is far-reaching, impacting food supply, hydropower generation, and urban and rural communities.
- ***The Lower Basin shortage presents a potential national food and economic crisis.***
- ***Our coalition seeks to collaborate with other stakeholders and do our part to lessen the impact of this looming disaster.***

Save the River Proposal

- ***The goal of the Coalition is to voluntarily*** leave 1-million-acre feet of water in Lake Mead to protect the Colorado River system.
- ***Our proposal provides wet water to store in Lake Mead acting as a bridge measure*** buying time for additional water conservation.
- We are organizing irrigation districts for immediate plan implementation.
- Our goal is to:
 - ***Keep water and power in supply to over 40 million people.***
 - ***Grow enough food to avoid a food crisis in North America.***
 - ***Keep agriculture strong.***
 - ***Support our communities.***

Save the River Proposal

1. Reduce agriculture lands releases from Lake Mead by 1-million-acre/ft annually for 4 years to protect the system.
2. Water orders will be reduced by 1-acre/ft per Lower Basin irrigated acre.
3. Participation is voluntary.
4. Natural disaster recovery funding at \$1,500 per acre/ft will preserve food production.

Proposal Summary

- Our plan requests \$1,500 per acre foot of senior-right water voluntarily left in Lake Mead.
- ***\$1,500 is less than the cost of new ground water resources, and less than the cost of other water in the Western region.***
- Offering everyone the same investment of \$1,500 ensures participation and significantly eases the burden of allocation and distribution for the federal government. This is an **equitable** proposal with immediate results.
- Our request for \$1,500 per acre foot will help cover increased costs of producing crops necessary to avoid a devastating food shortage. It will enable us to:
 - Avoid a national food crisis
 - Maximize participation
 - Pay for technology improvements
 - Keep employees
 - Stabilize agriculture dependent communities and industries
 - Bridge the drought while water resources are developed

Securing National Food Supply

- This is an investment to prevent a catastrophic food crisis by farming the land with less water to protect the Colorado River system.
- Yuma County farmers have worked with the University of Arizona for years to develop unique crop rotation strategies and sophisticated irrigation techniques that maximize yield and conserve water resources.
- **For example, some winter vegetable farmers use drip irrigation to achieve a more than a 1-acre/ft reduction in water use at a \$1,200 per acre annual cost.**
- The Yuma area produces, or ships 90 percent of the leafy vegetables eaten by 300 million people in the United States and Canada during the winter months.