



NEWS RELEASE

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Tucson-Phoenix Water Agreement Announced at White House Water Summit

A landmark agreement among municipal Arizona water providers was highlighted at a groundbreaking water summit which took place today in Washington, D.C.

The White House Water Summit, held in conjunction with United Nations World Water Day, focused on the country's water issues and potential solutions using innovative science and technology. It was attended by stakeholders from government, public, private, academic and nonprofit sectors to help build a sustainable and secure water future.

One highlight of the summit was the Tucson, Phoenix and Metropolitan Domestic Water Improvement District's water exchange agreement. Tucson Water Director Timothy Thomure and Phoenix Water Services Director Kathryn Sorensen represented their respective cities at the summit, highlighting details and next steps needed to continue the successful pilot program.

In the next year, the cities will work together to grow their water exchange, increasing the amount of water stored annually to more than 1.6 billion gallons of water, or enough to serve more than 17,000 homes for a year.

Under the 2014 agreements, Phoenix stores some of its unused Colorado River water in Tucson aquifers — water that Phoenix would otherwise lose to another water user. During future shortages on the Colorado River, the City of Tucson and Metro Water will pump the stored water out of their aquifers and deliver it to their customers. In exchange, both Tucson water providers will order a part of their Colorado River water for delivery to Phoenix water treatment plants.

The partnership not only increases the reliability of Phoenix's Colorado River water supply over the long term, it also provides immediate benefits to aquifers in Pima County by increasing their groundwater levels.

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“In Arizona, cities are leading the way in water security and conservation,” said Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild. “The agreement between Tucson and Phoenix benefits both cities, saving money, water, and energy costs, and increasing water security.”

“If we are truly going to confront drought and climate change in Arizona, cities must lead the way,” said Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton. “Being recognized by the White House for this first-of-its-kind agreement with Tucson and Metro Water will hopefully provide a model for other cities to find innovative ways to project and safeguard their water supplies.”

The Tucson-Phoenix Water Agreement is part of the White House document “Commitments To Action On Building A Sustainable Water Future” and is online at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/White_House_Water_Summit_commitments_report_032216.pdf.

Additional information and background on the Tucson-Phoenix Water Agreement are online at www.tucsonaz.gov/water.

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Tucson Water is the largest water utility in the Tucson area, serving more than 715,000 people with safe and reliable water service for more than 100 years. Tucson Water’s primary water sources are surface water from the Central Arizona Project (CAP), groundwater, and recycled water. We are committed to continuous improvements in water-use efficiency and conservation, which are cost-effective and energy-efficient ways of ensuring future water reliability for Tucson’s businesses and residents. Our commitment is to ensure that our customers receive high quality water and excellent service in a safe, reliable, efficient, and environmentally responsible manner.

The city of Phoenix Water Services Department is more than 100 years old and treats and distributes tap water to 1.5 million customers daily. Phoenix Water manages the city's sewer system, and handles wastewater treatment operations for 2.5 million residents in five Valley cities. Infrastructure includes 7,000 miles of water lines, 5,000 miles of sewer lines, eight treatment plants, 50,000 fire hydrants and 90,000 manholes. Phoenix's water and sewer rates are among the lowest of comparable-sized cities nationwide. Our tap water supply is in very good shape due to decades of planning and multiple water sources. The city reuses nearly all of its wastewater on crops, wetlands and energy production.