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Congress of the United States
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October 23rd, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

I am writing to follow up on my [September 29 letter concerning the federal government's Colorado River operating framework](#) and to respond to your recent [interview with KOLD News 13](#), in which you characterized Arizona's impending water reductions as "completely manageable."

Respectfully, I disagree. That characterization does not adequately reflect the magnitude of the cuts Arizona is being asked to absorb, the sacrifices our state has already made, or the consequences these reductions could have for Arizona's communities, farmers, businesses, and long-term economic security.

Under the current framework, Arizona is facing a reduction of 760,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water over the next two years—roughly one-quarter of our allocation. California is facing a reduction of 440,000 acre-feet, while Nevada is facing 50,000 acre-feet. Meanwhile, the four Upper Basin states are not subject to mandatory reductions under this framework.

Arizona has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to conserve water and be part of the solution. Our cities, tribes, agricultural producers, water providers, and businesses have invested in conservation, storage, and infrastructure to stretch every available drop. We have made difficult decisions because we understand the severity of the Colorado River's challenges. But Arizona cannot continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of the burden while other states are spared mandatory reductions.

What may appear manageable in a Washington briefing room looks very different on the ground in Arizona. Water is not an abstract accounting exercise. It sustains families, farms, tribes, communities, military installations, mines, semiconductor manufacturing, and industries essential to our nation's economic and national security. Significant reductions carry real costs, including increased pressure on local water supplies, higher infrastructure expenses, and difficult choices about how communities sustain growth and economic activity.

We must also recognize the profound importance of the Colorado River to Arizona's Tribal Nations. As sovereign nations with water rights, communities, and futures at stake, Tribes must have their concerns meaningfully addressed—not overlooked or treated as an afterthought in negotiations that will shape the river's future.

I share the Trump administration's commitment to finding practical, lasting solutions to the West's water challenges. I also agree that innovation must be part of the answer. Conservation alone cannot solve a structural supply problem. We must pursue meaningful water augmentation through desalination, advanced water treatment, aquifer recharge, storage, and conveyance infrastructure while ensuring that the responsibility for conservation is shared fairly among the states that depend on the river.

That is precisely why I am asking you to come to Arizona as soon as possible. Water is life for Arizonans. I invite you to join me for a flyover tour of the Colorado River system and the Arizona communities, farms, mines, Tribal lands, and infrastructure directly affected by these decisions. Seeing these realities firsthand will make clear why Arizona's concerns cannot be dismissed as "completely manageable" and why we need a fair framework that protects our state's water security, sustains our economy, and respects the water rights and sovereignty of our Tribal Nations.

My objective is not to assign blame. It is to ensure that federal policy reflects the realities facing Arizona and that our state receives fair treatment as we work toward a durable agreement. The decisions made now will have consequences well beyond the next two years, and Arizona's interests must be fully represented in the path forward.

I appreciate your service and your commitment to addressing the West's water challenges. I hope you will accept this invitation and see firsthand why Arizona's concerns deserve serious attention. I look forward to working with you to advance solutions that protect Arizona's water, respect Tribal sovereignty, strengthen the Colorado River system, and secure the future of the American West.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Paul A. Gosar" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress