



Statutory Fix Needed to Simplify Recovery of Stored Water

Arizona has stored excess Colorado River water supplies underground for decades to prepare for future shortages

- The Arizona Water Banking Authority (AWBA) was established in 1996 to protect Municipal & Industrial water users by storing Colorado River water underground.
- Over 3.5 million acre-feet of water has been stored by the AWBA for future use in times of shortage.

Planning for the recovery of the AWBA supplies stored underground has been an ongoing effort

- The Arizona Dept. of Water Resources, Central Arizona Project, and AWBA have been working for the past two years with the Recovery Planning Advisory Group (RPAG) which consists of agricultural, municipal, tribal, utility and on-river entities.
- RPAG has identified various opportunities to implement the recovery (or retrieval) of the water that has been stored underground by the AWBA since the 1990's.

More options exist today for the recovery of stored water than were originally envisioned

- When the statutes were written, it was assumed that CAP would pump the water stored by the AWBA and then deliver that water through the CAP canal to Municipal & Industrial users.
- Through the RPAG process, it was identified that for shortage in the near-term, Municipal & Industrial users can recover AWBA water independently through their own infrastructure.
- Statutes reflect the old assumption and only allow the AWBA to transfer its water credits to CAP, instead of the end users.

An opportunity to streamline the process for recovery of stored water:

Update Arizona's water banking laws to allow the AWBA to distribute water credits directly to Municipal & Industrial water users

- Allowing the AWBA to directly transfer water credits to M&I users can prevent the need for expensive new infrastructure, increasing the Water Bank's flexibility and lowering the cost of recovery.
- Providing the option for direct distribution of water to Municipal & Industrial users does not alter the Water Bank's statutory responsibilities, and CAP can still recover stored water when needed.

To better prepare for Colorado River shortages, now is the time to update Arizona water law to provide simplicity, flexibility, and cost savings for the recovery of water supplies stored by the Arizona Water Banking Authority