

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
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Janet Napolitano  
Governor

Herbert R. Guenther  
Director

Date: May 20, 2008  
To: The Honorable Governor Janet Napolitano  
From: Herbert R. Guenther, Co-chair  
Governor's Drought Task Force Interagency Coordinating Group  
Re: Recommendation to maintain Drought Emergency Declaration and the Drought Declaration issued by Executive Order 2007-10

The Governor's Drought Task Force Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) met on April 29, 2008, to discuss water supply status throughout Arizona and determine if the state's Drought Emergency Declaration (PCA 99006) and Drought Declaration for the State of Arizona issued May 2007 (Executive Order 2007-10) should be continued. Reports were provided by the Salt River Project on the Salt and Verde watersheds, the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) on the Colorado River basin, and the State Drought Monitoring Technical Committee on climate conditions. In addition, ADWR provided a community water planning update on the conservation program, the executive order designating April as Water Awareness Month, and progress with drinking water providers and local drought impact groups.

After the reports on water supply and climate conditions were presented, the ICG made a unanimous decision to recommend that both declarations be kept in place. The ICG's decision was based on the following considerations:

- Although the Verde and Salt reservoir systems are nearly full, the Colorado reservoir system, which is 40% of Arizona's water supply, is still well below its average level.
- Data show abnormally dry to moderate long-term drought conditions across the majority of the state due to cumulative dryness and the effects of the current multi-year drought.
- Precipitation totals have been below normal:
  - In Payson and Alpine - seven of the past 10 years
  - In Tucson - eight of the past 10 years
  - In Phoenix - nine of the past 10 years
- Most rural communities rely on groundwater, which does not recharge as quickly as surface water reservoirs.
- Forecasts predict continued below average precipitation. Since mid-February, precipitation amounts have been well below average statewide, and there is no clear indication that Arizona will see a wet monsoon this summer.
- One good year of winter precipitation cannot erase several years of persistent drought conditions. Arizona would need at least three consecutive wet winters to consider discontinuing the drought declarations.

Thank you for your consideration.

