JANICE K. BREWER
Governor

MICHAEL J. LACEY
Director

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Mr. Kevin Kinsall, Natural Resources Policy Advisor
Office of Governor Janice K. Brewer
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Recommendation to Maintain the Drought Emergency Declaration PCA99006 and Drought Declaration issued by Executive Order 2007-10

Dear Mr. Kevin Kinsall,

This letter provides the spring 2014 update on Arizona's drought conditions and recommendations to the Governor from the Drought Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG). The ICG is an important part of the state's overall drought preparedness strategy as described in the Arizona Drought Preparedness Plan and the Plan's annual progress reports. The ICG, comprised of state, federal, tribal and non-governmental organizations, is an advisory body to the Governor on Arizona drought issues. This group meets in the spring and fall to evaluate drought conditions and provide recommendations to the Governor regarding emergency declarations due to drought. The ICG met on May 13, 2014 and, based on the findings below, recommends that the state's Drought Emergency Declaration (PCA99006) and Drought Declaration for the State of Arizona (Executive Order 2007-10) be continued.

The May 13 meeting included the following presentations:

- Drought and Arizona's Vision for Water Supply Sustainability
  Michael J. Lacey (Co-chair), Arizona Department of Water Resources

- Drought Status, Forecasts, and Activities of the State Drought Monitoring Technical Committee
  Nancy Selover, Arizona State University
  Gary Woodall, National Weather Service

- Water Supply - Colorado River
  Tom Buschatzke, Arizona Department of Water Resources

- Water Supply - Salt & Verde Watersheds
  Charlie Ester, Salt River Project

- Wildfire Outlook
  Byron Kimball, State Forestry Division

The main points described below form the basis of the Drought ICG's recommendations:

1. **Drought status and outlook:**

We have now finished our fourth consecutive dry winter within the state watersheds and the third consecutive dry winter in the Colorado River Basin. The entire state except for the far southwestern edge continues to be in some level of drought ranging from abnormally dry to severe.

Last summer's monsoon turned out to be wetter than normal and made up a small amount of the deficit in the Salt-Verde reservoir system. Wet conditions in November and December helped moisten the soil before the winter snow accumulation, setting the stage for an early spring green-up brought on by warmer than normal late winter temperatures. Dry conditions since January 1st, however, have led to deterioration of all watersheds except the lower Colorado in Yuma and La Paz Counties. In addition to the record-warm conditions, the state has experienced windier than normal conditions that have accelerated the drying of the rangeland and forests, exacerbating wildfire dangers.

The 2014 summer outlook's odds favor above normal temperatures. The outlook also has very slightly enhanced odds for above-average precipitation, but there are no clear indicators for whether the monsoon will be significantly drier or wetter than normal. While the outlook shows a slight tilt in the odds toward above-normal precipitation, we have no way to estimate how much above or below normal the monsoon might be. Though April through June are the driest months of the year, increased temperatures and high winds are likely to make conditions worse before they get better with the summer rains. Signals point to an El Nino winter, however, there is still much uncertainty about the strength of El Nino and its impacts on our winter weather. Therefore, there are equal chances of above or below normal precipitation in winter 2014-15.

2. **Fire outlook:**

An analysis of drought conditions, fine fuels, seasonal temperature and precipitation, current weather patterns, and the monsoon outlook suggests above normal fire

season potential and an earlier onset, especially in the southern and eastern brushlands. Severe conditions could be temporarily mitigated by seasonal moisture, resulting in short duration improvements. Lack of moisture will result in above normal fire potential, especially considering the abundance of fine fuels across the region to facilitate fire ignition and spread. If drought and windy conditions worsen, erratic and extreme fire behavior potential will need to be considered as a given in areas with heavier brush and timber fuels, and at higher elevations than typical. "

3. **Reservoir status:**

Reservoir levels in all the watersheds are near or below 50% of capacity. The current Colorado River reservoir system storage stands at 47% of total system capacity as of May 12, 2014, compared to 52% at this time last year. It is projected that Lake Powell and Lake Mead storage will generally decline through 2016. The Colorado River Basin is experiencing a 14-year drought that is the driest in the historical record dating back to 1906. The US Bureau of Reclamation's projections show a 15%probability that Lake Powell's release for water year 2016 could again be reduced to 7.48 million acre-feet. The projections also show a 23% probability of a Tier 1 shortage in the Lower Basin in 2016 and a 51% probability of Tier 1 shortage in the Lower Basin in 2017. A Tier 1 shortage in 2016 — 320,000 acre-feet reduction to Arizona —- would be taken by the Central Arizona Project (CAP). CAP water deliveries would not be reduced to Indian, Municipal, Industrial or Non-Indian Agricultural Priority users. However, all "other excess" deliveries would be curtailed, and deliveries to CAP's agriculture pool would be reduced by about 60%.

This is the fourth year that the Salt and Verde watersheds experienced below median winter runoff. The current Salt and Verde reservoir system storage stands at 57% of normal as of May 2, 2014, resulting in increased use of groundwater to meet demand. Projections for very low inflow in winter 2014-15 would result in the 8th driest winter on record.

While communities in some areas of the state are facing water shortages, the major metropolitan areas are not facing immediate water crises. Growing statewide imbalance between water supplies and demand is projected in the next 25 years. At the request of the Governor, Arizona's "Strategic Vision for Water Supply Sustainability" identifies possible strategies and projects to reduce this imbalance.

4. **Recommendation:**

The updates confirmed that Arizona remains in long-term drought with most of the state experiencing abnormally dry to moderate conditions. Projections include warmer temperatures, lower than average precipitation, and persisting or intensifying

drought. Based on this information, the Drought ICG unanimously recommends that both drought declarations be kept in place.

The meeting summary and presentations are posted on the ADWR drought website at http://www.azwater.gov/azdwr/StatewidePlanning/Drought/default.htm.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Lacey, ICG Co-chair

cc: Chuck McHugh, ICG Co-chair

Enclosures:

- PCA99006 Drought Emergency Declaration
- Executive Order 2007-10 Drought Declaration for the State of Arizona