mesa·az
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

COUNCIL MINUTES

February 12, 2026

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in the Study Session room at City Hall, 20 East Main Street, on February 12, 2026, at 7:34 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT	COUNCIL ABSENT	OFFICERS PRESENT
Mark Freeman	None	Scott Butler
Scott Somers*		Holly Moseley
Rich Adams*		Jim Smith
Jennifer Duff		
Francisco Heredia		
Alicia Goforth		
Dorean Taylor		

(*Participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment.)

Mayor Freeman conducted a roll call.

1-a. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on Mesa City Center, including the redevelopment of the Post Office into Arizona State University Creative Technologies building, construction of a new retail Post Office, and development of the Light Walk.

This presentation will be rescheduled to a future date.

1-b. Hear a presentation, discuss, and receive an update on the current conditions of the Colorado River and impacts to the City of Mesa water portfolio.

Water Resources Director Christopher Hassert introduced Assistant Director Jessie Heywood and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Mr. Hassert advised that the 20-year Colorado River operating guidelines established in 2007 are set to expire at the end of 2026, amid an ongoing, prolonged drought and discussed the water level challenges and negotiations with other states. He reviewed the City's service areas and the water resources for each zone. He defined the term "acre-foot" as it relates to water supply, noting that one acre-foot is equivalent to a volume of water covering nearly the size of a football field, 160 feet. (See Pages 2 through 4 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Hassert explained that surface water for the City Zone area is treated at the Val Vista Water Treatment Plant, which is operated by Phoenix and jointly owned with Mesa. He stated that the City of Mesa (COM) has a treatment capacity of 90 million gallons per day (MGD) and access to about 62,000 acre-feet of water annually through Salt River Project (SRP), while current demand

is significantly lower at 33,000–35,000 acre-feet. He noted that demand is stable due to limited growth in the largely built-out area, resulting in excess capacity. He emphasized that this water supply is independent of the Colorado River, relying instead on in-state Salt and Verde River systems, which are currently at about 57% capacity. (See Page 5 of Attachment 1.)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Goforth, Mr. Hassert shared that in the past when SRP declared a shortage and significantly reduced supplies, the City maintained supply capacity above its demand within the City Zone, and the City continues to have excess capacity available. He explained the forecasting process that staff performs to determine the amount of water the City will require, and confirmed that the City does not store any unused water.

Responding to a question posed by Councilmember Taylor, Mr. Hassert affirmed that Mesa only uses approximately 50% of its SRP on-project water, its main provider, which is sufficient to serve households in that region. He mentioned that although there is excess capacity in on-project areas, that water cannot be transferred elsewhere.

Mr. Hassert discussed the Central Arizona Project (CAP) off-project water supply which has been developed independently, primarily from Colorado River sources. He added that the biggest share of Colorado River water comes from municipal and industrial (M&I), and the current demand in the eastern and southern zones is about 58,000 acre-feet; however, Mesa has about 61,000 acre-feet available, slightly exceeding current demand. He indicated that future Colorado River cuts are expected to create challenges, making additional and backup supplies necessary. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Responding to a question posed by Councilmember Duff, Mr. Hassert explained that while infrastructure could physically allow water to move from SRP canals to the CAP canal, on-project water cannot legally be transferred and the benefits must stay with the land. He noted that Mesa is able to transfer its share of New Conservation Space (NCS) water, since Mesa pays for NCS water and related projects, allowing that water to be moved to the Southeast.

Mr. Hassert identified Mesa's additional water supplies and discussed the water exchange process for the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC). He emphasized that the water obtained through the GRIC exchange is significantly cheaper, $85 per acre-foot versus $365 for standard CAP M&I water. (See Pages 7 and 8 of Attachment 1)

Responding to a question from Councilmember Goforth, Mr. Hassert answered that the exchange water costs fluctuate annually based on CAP energy costs. He indicated that the pumping rate recently dropped from $95 to $85 per acre-foot, while standard (M&I) CAP water continues to increase in price.

Mr. Hassert stated that CAP is the largest energy consumer in the state of Arizona.

Mr. Hassert reviewed Mesa's NCS additional water supply and the history and expansion of Roosevelt Dam, noting that the project was significant for Mesa, providing an additional 41,000 acre-feet of flood storage. He emphasized that the NCS water is not limited to specific projects and may be used anywhere within Mesa's service area. He indicated that Bartlett Dam, located on the Verde River, is undergoing construction of a new dam, creating new flood storage. He reported that Mesa is a stakeholder and anticipates receiving between 10,000- to 13,000-acre feet to help support off-project areas. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Taylor, Mr. Hassert explicated the calculations of the water storage and commented that staff expect to increase the annual NCS supply from 12,500 to approximately 15,000 acre-feet of storage.

Responding to a question posed by Mayor Freeman, Mr. Hassert replied that Mesa uses about 88 million gallons of water per day, or approximately 98,000 acre-feet annually citywide, with about 58,000 acre-feet in CAP service areas.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Hassert reported that this year the reservoir levels across the West are expected to be below average. He noted, while conditions within the SRP system are currently holding steady, they remain below average, and Colorado River supplies are also projected to be below average.

Councilmember Duff commented that Arizona's water supply depends more on snowfall than rainfall.

Councilmember Taylor shared that during a recent SRP watershed tour, hydrologists reported reservoirs at Bartlett Lake, Horseshoe Bend, and the Verde River were slightly above maximum allowance at that time due to recent rain, though conditions are expected to fluctuate.

Mr. Hassert explained that Mesa's backup groundwater source provides approximately 10,000 acre-feet per year in the City's 100-year Assured Water Supply. He described the two components of groundwater and the process for using the aquifer and how the amount for the water supply is determined. He stated that Mesa typically pumps about half that amount in a normal year to preserve groundwater as a backup supply, though pumping could increase during Colorado River shortages, particularly to support eastern and southern service areas. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Taylor, Mr. Hassert commented that leakage mainly comes from pipe joints and seeps back into the aquifer, and Mesa receives credit. He mentioned that Mesa's leakage rate is about 5%, which is considered good since Arizona requires water providers to stay below 10% under the 1980 Groundwater Management Act.

Responding to a question posed by Councilmember Goforth, Mr. Hassert explained how unused groundwater is allocated.

Mr. Hassert provided an overview of Mesa's long-term storage credits (LTSCs), noting that the City has over 500,000 acre-feet banked underground. He pointed out several ways to earn LTSC and emphasized that Mesa has approximately 10 years of LTSC to use. (See Page 11 of Attachment 1)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Hassert discussed the process for large water users who must obtain their own LTSC rather than using the City's supply. He explained that Mesa directs companies to third-party suppliers and estimates how many credits are required over a three-year forecast. He elaborated on the locations of water pumping and the credit source. He advised that many large companies are redesigning operations to use less water, partly because LTSCs are expensive. He described how a closed loop system operates more efficiently.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Taylor, City Manager Scott Butler said that Google has begun transitioning from water cooled to air cooled facilities due to water use

concerns from the community. He stressed that the City encourages companies to use the most sustainable water and energy technologies.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Hassert stated that every city or town has guidelines in place through the 1980 Groundwater Management Act on how water is pumped and the constraints, as well as each city must maintain its own Assured Water Supply. He mentioned the partnerships with the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA), and the future of water use. He mentioned that all cities have groundwater challenges.

Mr. Butler added that the City stays vigilant in ensuring that water supplies are protected.

Responding to a question posed by Mayor Freeman, Mr. Hassert replied that the City has 557,084 acre-feet of annually stored water credits, and when water is pumped from the ground those credits are extinguished. He discussed the options for recharge programs to increase their LTSC and exchange water. He noted that Mesa continues to build storage credits, but in years with severe water cuts, the City may use some of those stored credits, which are permanently reduced once pumped.

Mr. Heywood presented historical data showing that Mesa's water demand rose sharply in the 1990s due to population growth and higher per-customer use, peaked around 2004, and has since leveled off despite continued customer growth, largely due to efficiency improvements. He noted that surface water sources are expected to increase in supply beginning in 2027–2028 with the Central Mesa Reuse Pipeline delivering a full year of reclaimed water to the GRIC. (See Page 12 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Hassert added that the water supply is ordered by cost priority, with the least expensive water used first (CAP exchange water with GRIC at about $85 per acre-foot), while more expensive sources are added afterward.

In response to a question from Mayor Freeman, Mr. Hassert replied that the City pays approximately $70 per acre-foot for SRP water.

Mr. Heywood provided an overview of a scenario involving significant Colorado River cuts and leased water projected to occur in 2027 that assumes a gap between projected demand and available surface water. He described another scenario that includes additional water sources where the City would be able to meet demand. (See Pages 13 and 14 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Hassert clarified that within the next five years, even with an estimated 20% water cut, Mesa would rely very little on backup supplies. He added that since the actual cuts are still being negotiated, any additional reductions would further decrease available surface water, requiring greater use of alternative supplies. He noted that beyond 2030, current efforts, such as projects involving Bartlett Dam and exploring new water sources, will become critical to maintaining supply, emphasizing the need for long-term planning to stay ahead of potential shortages.

Responding to multiple questions posed by Councilmember Taylor, Mr. Hassert cautioned that SRP project water must remain on designated project lands and cannot be used citywide, but Mesa can utilize their additional water sources funded at Roosevelt and Bartlett Dams to transfer its own water through the CAP canal. He added that these supplies can be used citywide, though they are typically directed where needed.

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Hassert explained that future cuts to the CAP will create a firm limit on available Colorado River water, effectively capping how much cities can grow their water use. He advised that cities, including Mesa, must plan within these limits unless they develop alternative supplies. He added that rural areas are largely independent since those areas rely on separate aquifers that are not hydrologically connected to the City's.

Mr. Hassert reported that to prepare for potentially more severe and long-term water cuts, Mesa has been proactively expanding its water supply portfolio for several years. He discussed key efforts, including adding supply from the Bartlett Dam project, about 3,000 acre-feet annually, and combining it with existing NCS water stored behind Roosevelt Dam. He also highlighted the GRIC exchange, which currently provides about 8,000 acre-feet, but could increase to 16,000–17,000 with the reuse pipeline. He commented that the City is exploring infrastructure improvements to increase reclaimed water production and maximize available Colorado River supplies. (See Page 15 of Attachment 1)

In response to multiple questions posed by Councilmember Duff, Mr. Hassert confirmed that Mesa is not close to reaching its capacity of the exchange, and that the exchange cannot decrease their limit per the contract which is secured until 2100. He answered that the COM is working with the City of Phoenix on the 91st Avenue Water Treatment Plant that would treat excess reclaimed water to drinking standards, with Phoenix using the water locally while Mesa would receive an equivalent supply through exchange. He noted the project is costly but may receive federal funding.

Mr. Hassert described several strategies to expand Mesa's water supply and efficiency. He summarized the key points to managing Mesa's water resources. He indicated that the City has a strong and diversified water portfolio and is continuously evaluating and adjusting strategies to stay ahead of shortages while considering long-term feasibility and cost. He discussed the different levels of the water shortage plan, tools, and customer outreach. (See Pages 15 and 16 of Attachment 1)

Responding to multiple questions from Councilmember Taylor, Mr. Hassert replied that while the GRIC can face initial cuts to the CAP amounts, the federal government contract requires the government to replace those supplies, by securing storage, ultimately benefiting Mesa by stabilizing its exchange supply.

Councilmember Taylor emphasized that Mesa has responsibly and proactively managed its water planning, including long-term projections for growth and its 100-year Assured Water Plan. She stressed that each city is accountable for its water use and infrastructure decisions, and suggested the importance of communicating to residents that Mesa has effectively secured the current water capacity and the intentions for future water, and has the right to protect its resources.

Discussion ensued regarding the GRIC water exchange, investing in water infrastructure expansions, and the Drought Management Plan.

In response to a question from Mayor Freeman, Mr. Hassert confirmed that the City is still waiting for its Assured Water Supply designation to be approved by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR).

Government Relations Manager Kathy Macdonald advised that the application has been under review since October 2023, but the City's designation has been extended in the meantime. She noted that there are currently 118 water bills in legislature.

Mayor Freeman commented on the challenges to capture excess water in past years and stressed the importance of having local control and not outsourcing through legislature. He indicated that projects, such as the Bartlett Dam and system improvements, help to better store and utilize water.

Responding to a question from Mayor Freeman, Mr. Hassert explained that building a well costs approximately $6 to $7 million total; to manage costs and market fluctuations, the City is phasing projects and bidding wells in stages rather than all at once. He highlighted current Desert Wells 25 and 26 projects, noting additional well fields are planned farther south with projects extending over the next 20 years.

Councilmember Duff expressed appreciation for Mr. Hassert's leadership and expertise, crediting him and his team for strengthening Mesa's water system and leaving the City in a strong position.

Mr. Butler praised Mr. Hassert and his team for building a resilient and diverse water portfolio that supports residents and attracts businesses. He emphasized the importance of exploring multiple future water sources despite challenges and costs, and thanked Mr. Hassert for his leadership.

Mr. Butler announced that the new Water Resources Director will be Joseph Giudice upon Mr. Hassert retiring. He stated that Mr. Giudice has provided strong leadership in the Solid Waste Department and brings significant water-related experience from his time with the City of Phoenix prior to joining the COM.

Councilmember Adams thanked Mr. Hassert and suggested having a presentation prior to the utility rate increase for residents to better understand the need for rate adjustments. He emphasized the importance of maintaining infrastructure and acknowledged past efforts that built Mesa's reliable water system.

Mayor Freeman raised concerns about a proposed state bill that would impose a four-year moratorium on municipal fee and rate increases, warning of limitations on the City's ability to respond to funding for the City's needs.

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

2. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

2-a. Historic Preservation Advisory Board meeting held on November 4, 2025.

2-b. Economic Development Advisory Board meeting held on January 6, 2026.

2-c. Planning and Zoning Public Hearing Board meeting held on January 14, 2026.

2-d Planning and Zoning Board Study Session meeting held on January 14, 2026.

2-e Planning and Zoning Board Special Meeting held on January 14, 2026.

It was moved by Councilmember Duff, seconded by Councilmember Taylor, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Freeman–Somers–Adams–Duff–Goforth–Heredia–Taylor
NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

3. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Mayor Freeman and Councilmembers highlighted the events, meetings, and conferences recently attended.

4. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Scott Butler stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Thursday, February 19, 2026, 7:30 a.m. – Strategic Planning Session

Monday, February 23, 2026, 5:00 p.m. – Study Session

Monday, February 23, 2026, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:23 a.m.

CITY OF MESA CORPORATE SEAL MARICOPA COUNTY, AZ

MARK FREEMAN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 12th day of February 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

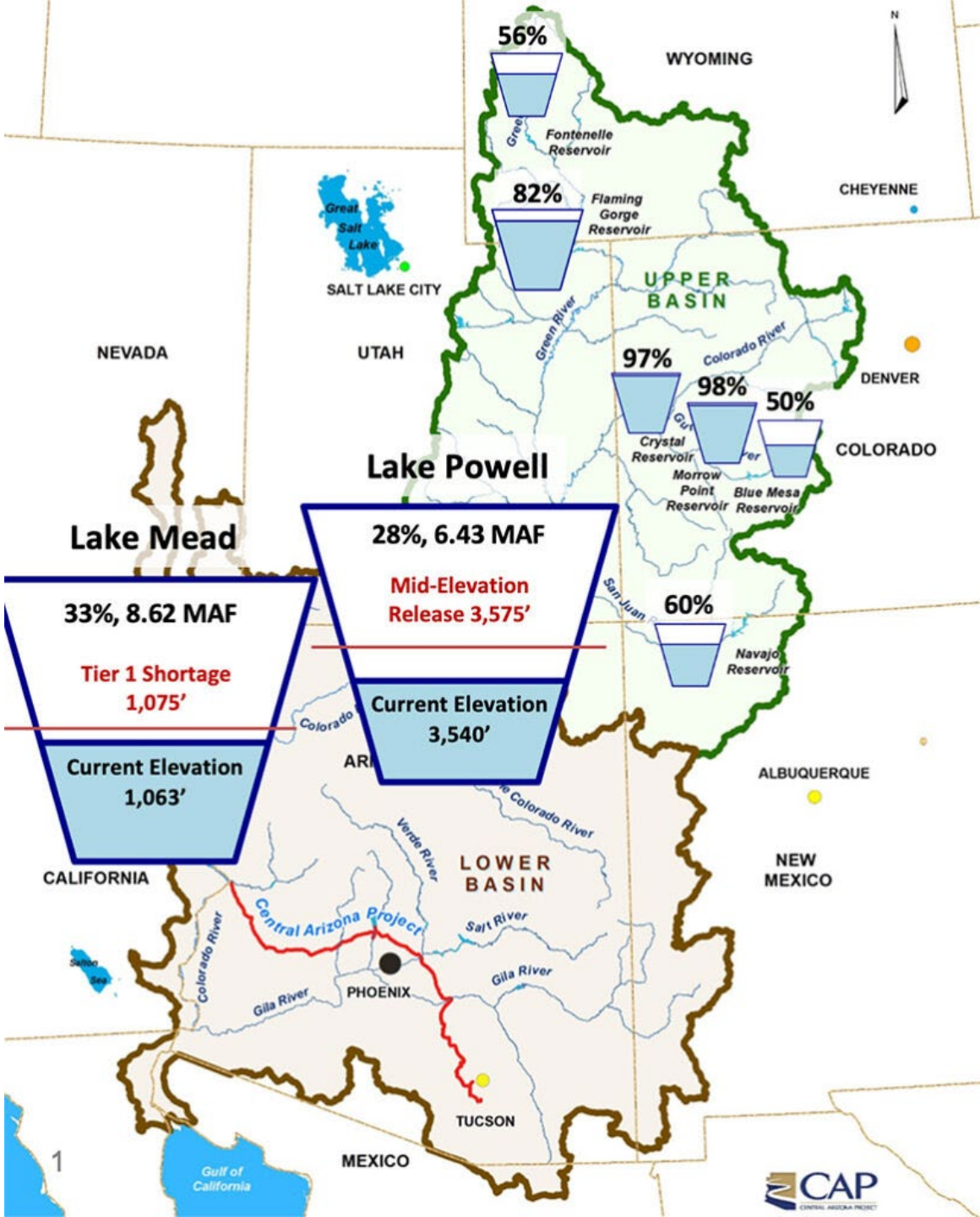
lr
(Attachments – 1)

Mesa Water Resources

Presented by Chris Hassert

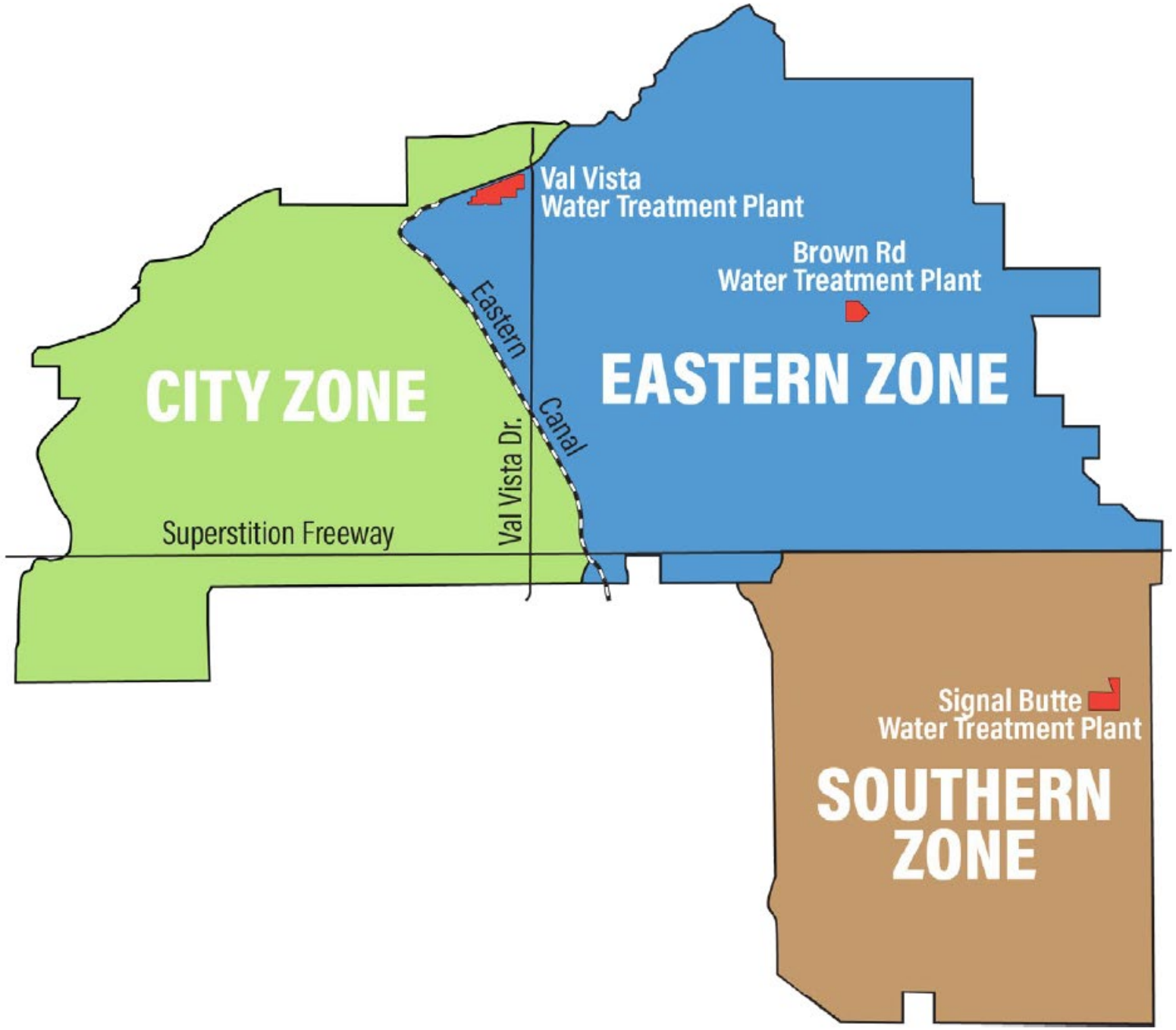
Introduction

- The 2007 Operating Guidelines for the Colorado River expire at the end of this year
- The Seven Basin States are working toward new Guidelines to start in 2027
- Arizona has already absorbed supply reductions
- Deeper cuts inevitable to address the supply-demand imbalance on the River System
- Prolonged drought and robust demand have contributed to falling reservoir levels
- Near term hydrologic projections are not encouraging
- Every Water Provider is unique and must address the challenges before them



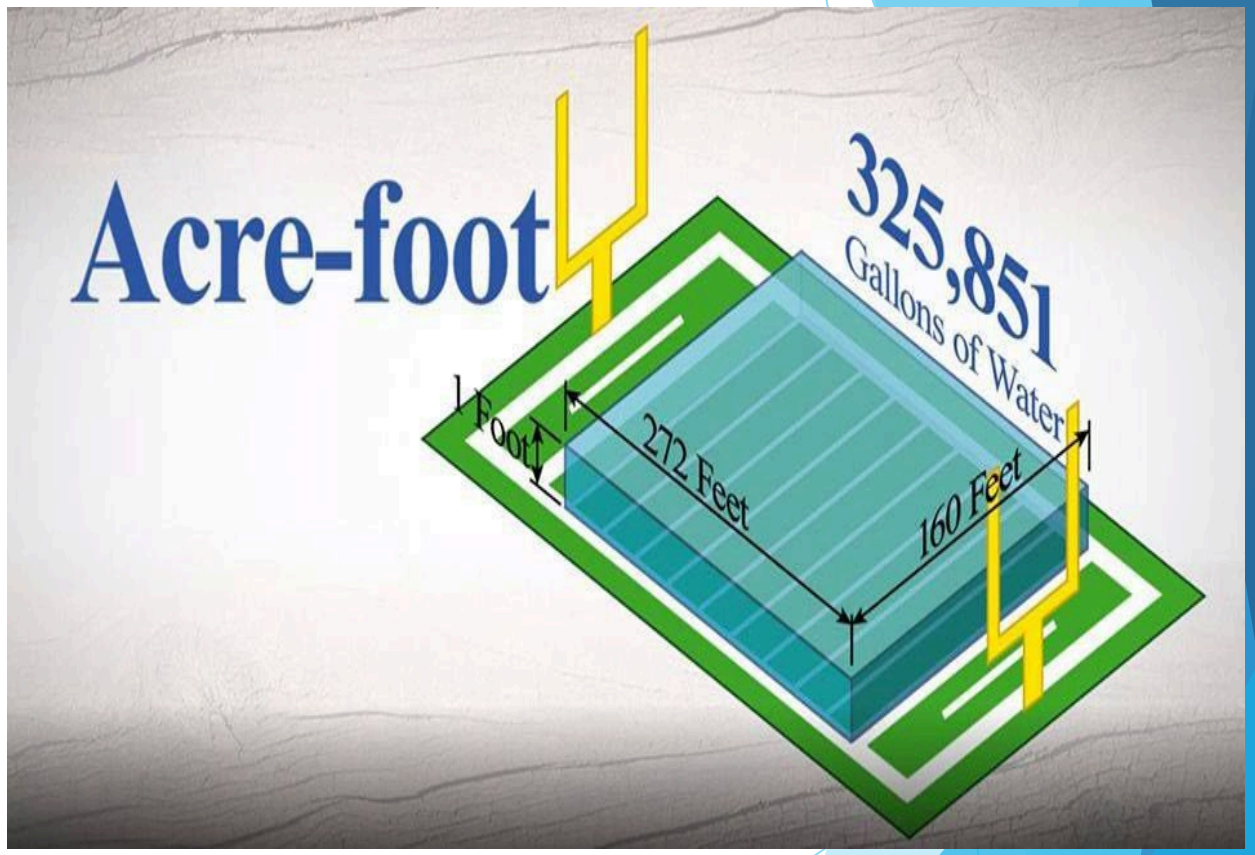
On-Project vs. Off-Project

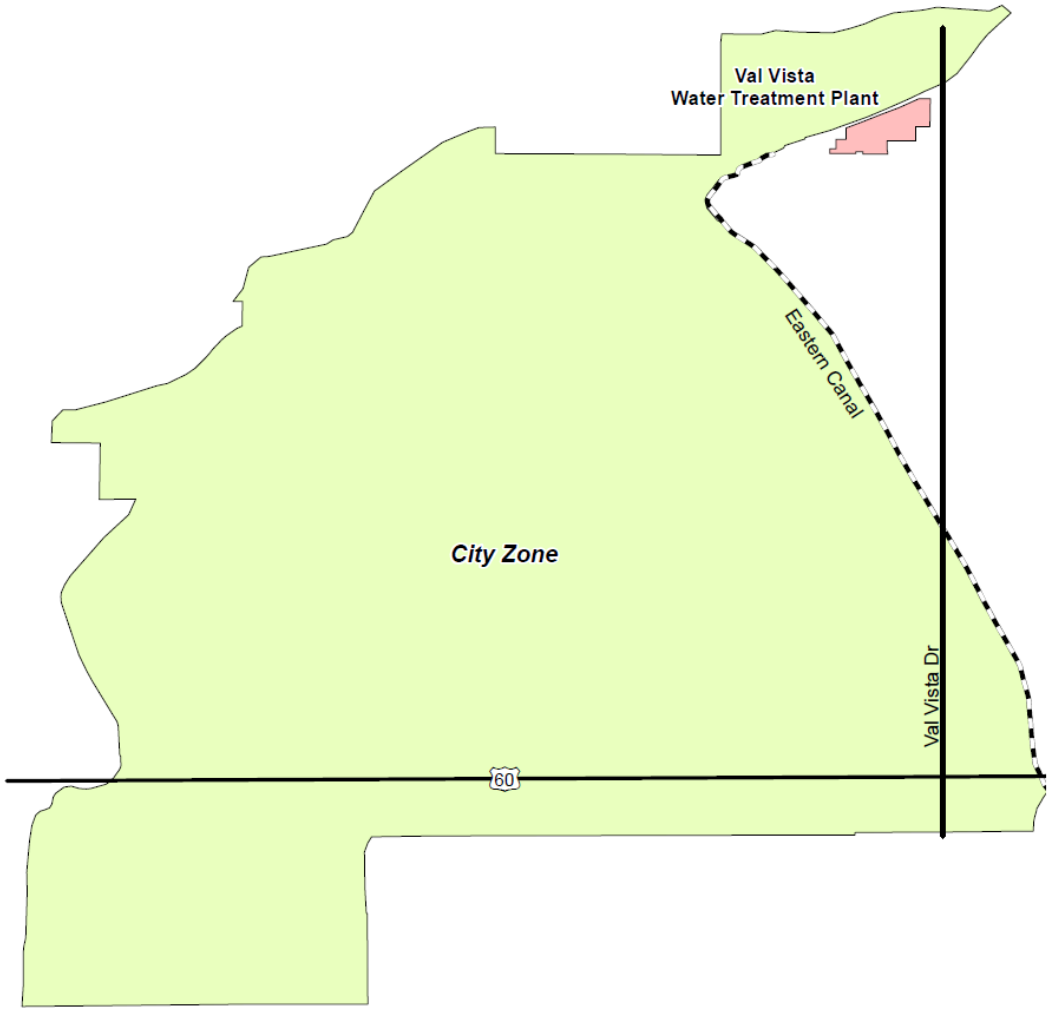
- "On-Project" area is the City Zone and served by SRP
- "Off-Project" area is comprised of the Eastern & Southern Zones and served by Colorado River Water
- All areas can be supplied with Groundwater



Water Units Refresher

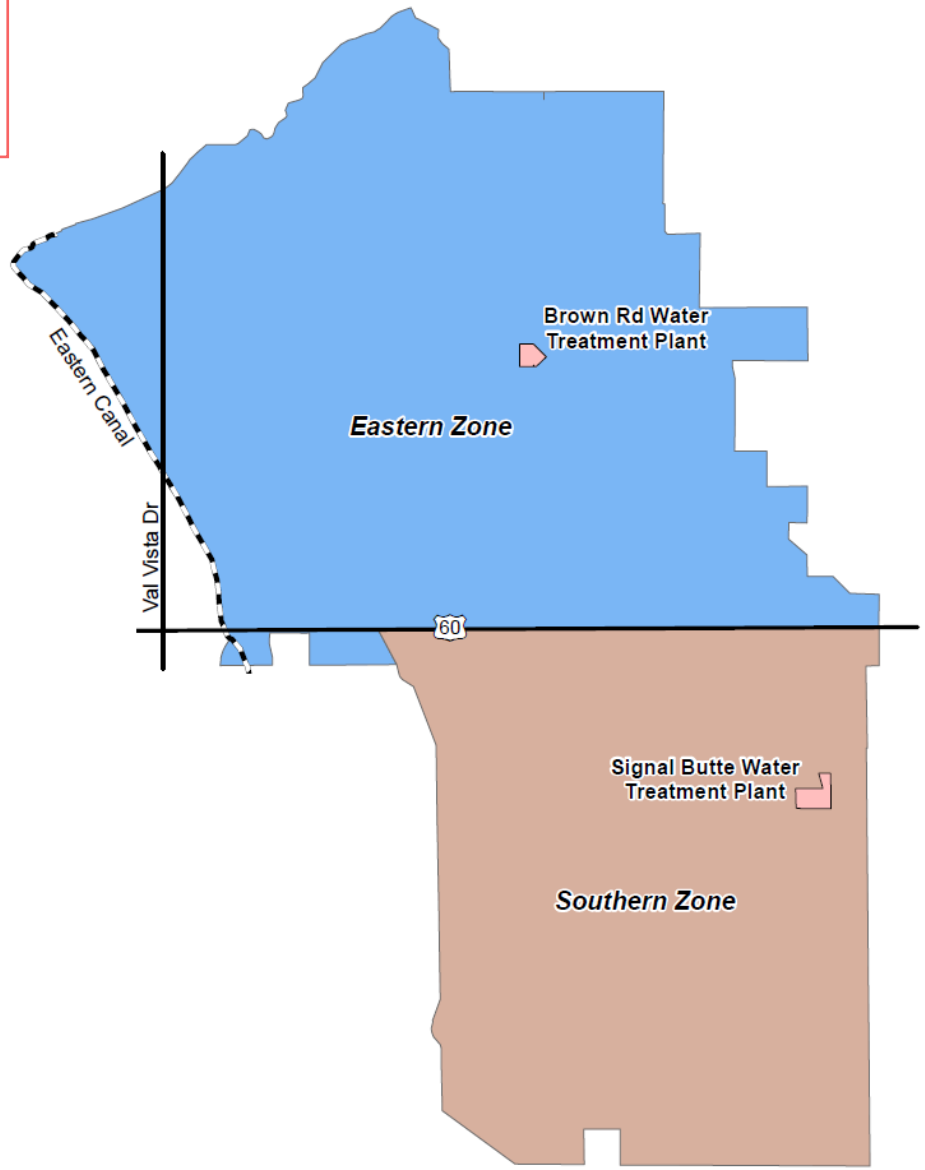
- Water usage for a Mesa median residential customer
  - 6,000 gallons per month
  - 72,000 gallons per year or 0.22 acre-feet/year
  - 1 acre-foot serves 4.5 median residential households for 1 year
- 1,000 acre-feet serves 4,500 median residential customers (households)
- 1,000 acre-feet serves 3,000 households consuming the average demand of 9kgal per month





Salt River Project (SRP) "On-Project"

SRP Resources	Annual af/yr
SRP Cutover Land (Acres)[1]	*21,194*
Surface Water Allocation (af/ac/yr)[1]	*2.27*
Allocation Water Availability =	**48,110**
Normal Flow Water Availability	**14,000**
TOTAL SRP Water=	**62,110**



Central Arizona Project "Off-Project"

CAP Resources (AF/YR)	Full Portfolio
MESA Municipal (M&I)	43,503
M&I Total	**43,503**
SRPMIC Lease (IP)	1,669
IP Total	**1,669**
Wellton-Mohawk (P3)	2,622
P3 Total	**2,622**
RWCD (NIA)	627
Hohokam (NIA)	4,924
NIA Total	**5,551**
Available Allocation	**53,345**

Mesa's Additional Water Supplies

- Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) Water Exchange
- New Conservation Space (NCS) Water
- Groundwater Pumping
- Underground Long-Term Storage Credits (LTSC)

Gila River Indian Community Water Exchange

- 5:4 exchange of Reuse Water from NWWRP, SEWRP & GWRP for CAP water delivered at SBWTP or BRWTP
- Water obtained through the exchange charged at the CAP pumping charge ($85/AF) opposed to M&I CAP rate of ($365/AF)
- Agreement allows Mesa to deliver up to 29,400 AF of Reuse water to be exchanged for 23,520 AF of CAP water
- For CY 2026, Mesa's CAP Order accounts for 8,128 AF of water through the Exchange
- Reuse water that will be delivered through the CMRP doubles the volume above

ew Conservation Space (NCS)

- Roosevelt Dam, completed in 1911
- In 1996, a $430M project raised the dam by 77 feet to increase storage in Lake Roosevelt
- Storage increased by 304,729 acre-feet
- Mesa's share of increased storage is 41,000 acre-feet
- In the City's 100-year AWS, ADWR recognizes an annual usage of 12,500 acre-feet
- This water can be used anywhere in Mesa's service area

Groundwater Pumping

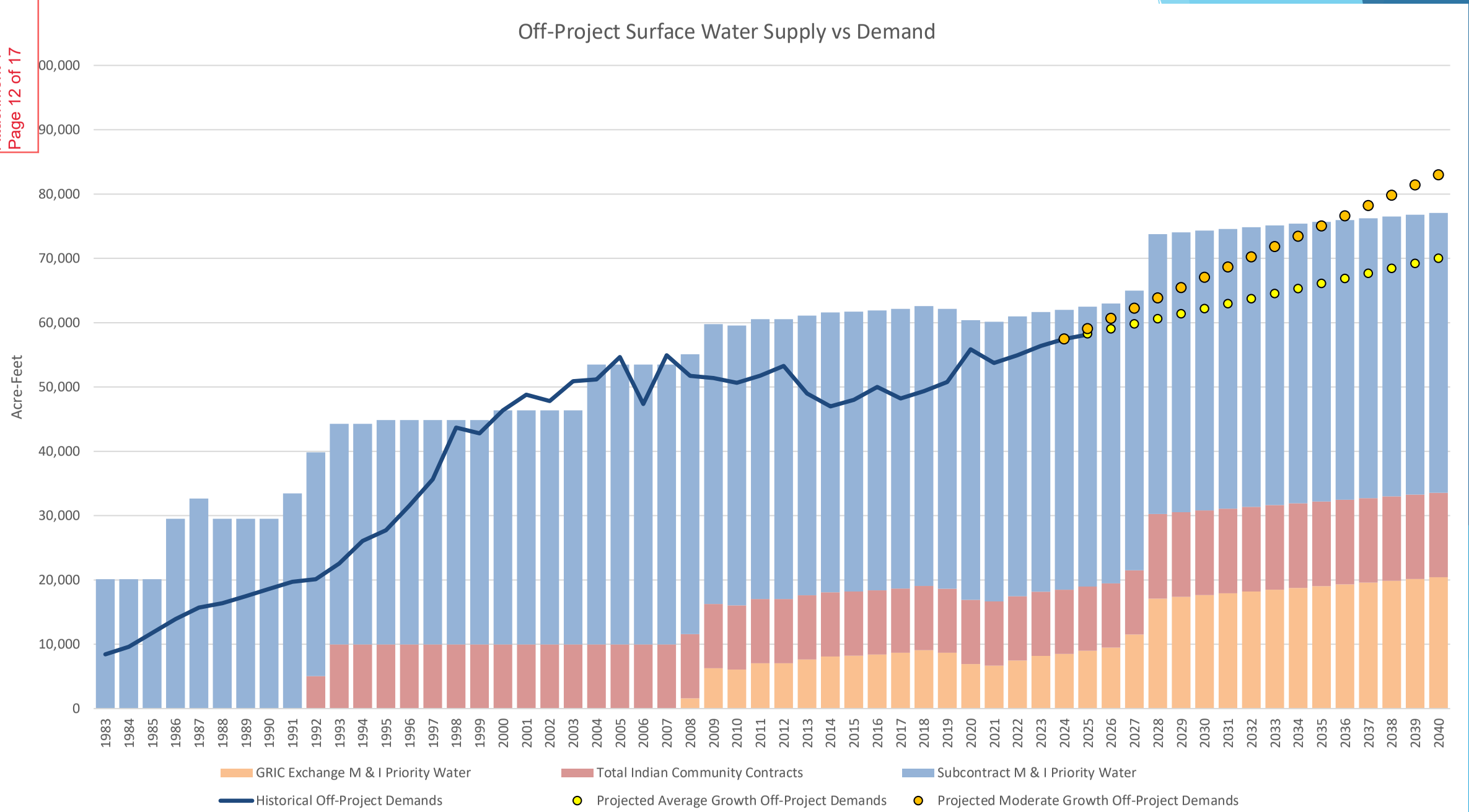
- Two types of Groundwater
  - Assured Water Supply Groundwater Allowance
  - Incidental Recharge
- Groundwater can be pumped in all parts of the service area
- Mesa has 35 active groundwater wells
- Pumping could be focused in the Eastern and Southern Zones during CAP supply reductions

Assured Water Supply Groundwater Allowance	**AF**
2025 Total Demand	*98,799*
Annual Incidental Recharge 5.35%	*5,286*
Groundwater Allowance	*467,895*
Annual Amount	*4,679*
Total Annual Groundwater Allowance + Incidental Recharge	***9,965***

Long-Term Storage Credits (LTSCs)

- Mesa has over 550,000 acre-feet of LTSCs banked underground
- Three quarters of the stored credits are in the Roosevelt Water Conservation District (RWCD) Groundwater Savings Facility (GSF)
- Granite Reef Underground Storage Project (GRUSP) operated by SRP was completed in 1994
- Since 2000, Mesa has banked nearly 90,000 acre-feet of Reclaimed and NCS water at GRUSP
- LTSCs are recovered through Mesa's groundwater pumping wells

Long Term Storage Credits	af
GRUSP	*88,228*
NWUSF	*49,710*
RWCD GSF	413,033
SRP GSF	4,642
Red Mtn USF	*1,470*
Total Stored Credits	***557,084***
Total Annual LTSCs	**5,571**


Off-Project Surface Water Supply vs Demand
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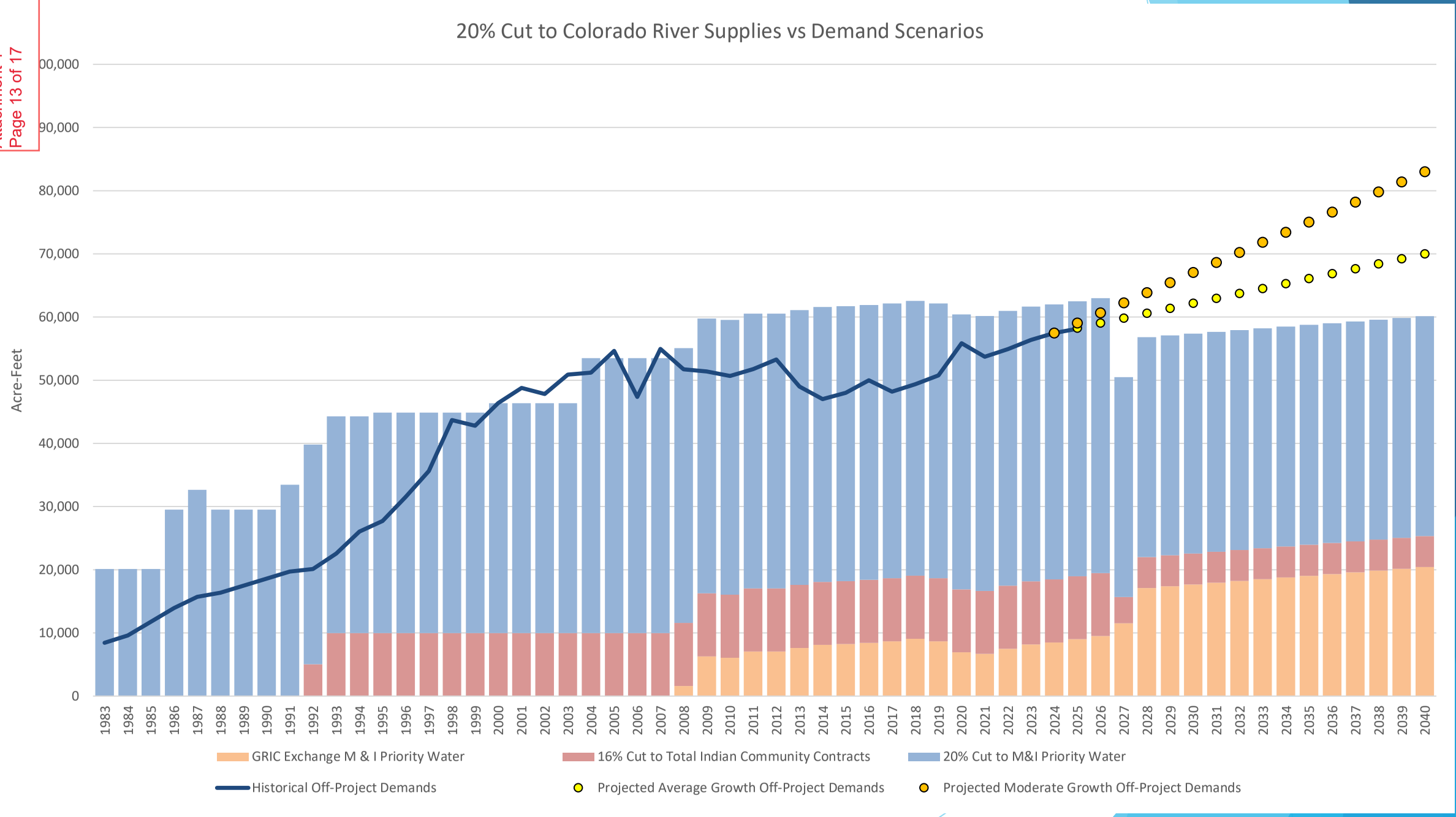
GRIC Exchange M & I Priority Water
Total Indian Community Contracts
Subcontract M & I Priority Water
Historical Off-Project Demands
Projected Average Growth Off-Project Demands
Projected Moderate Growth Off-Project Demands


20% Cut to Colorado River Supplies vs Demand Scenarios
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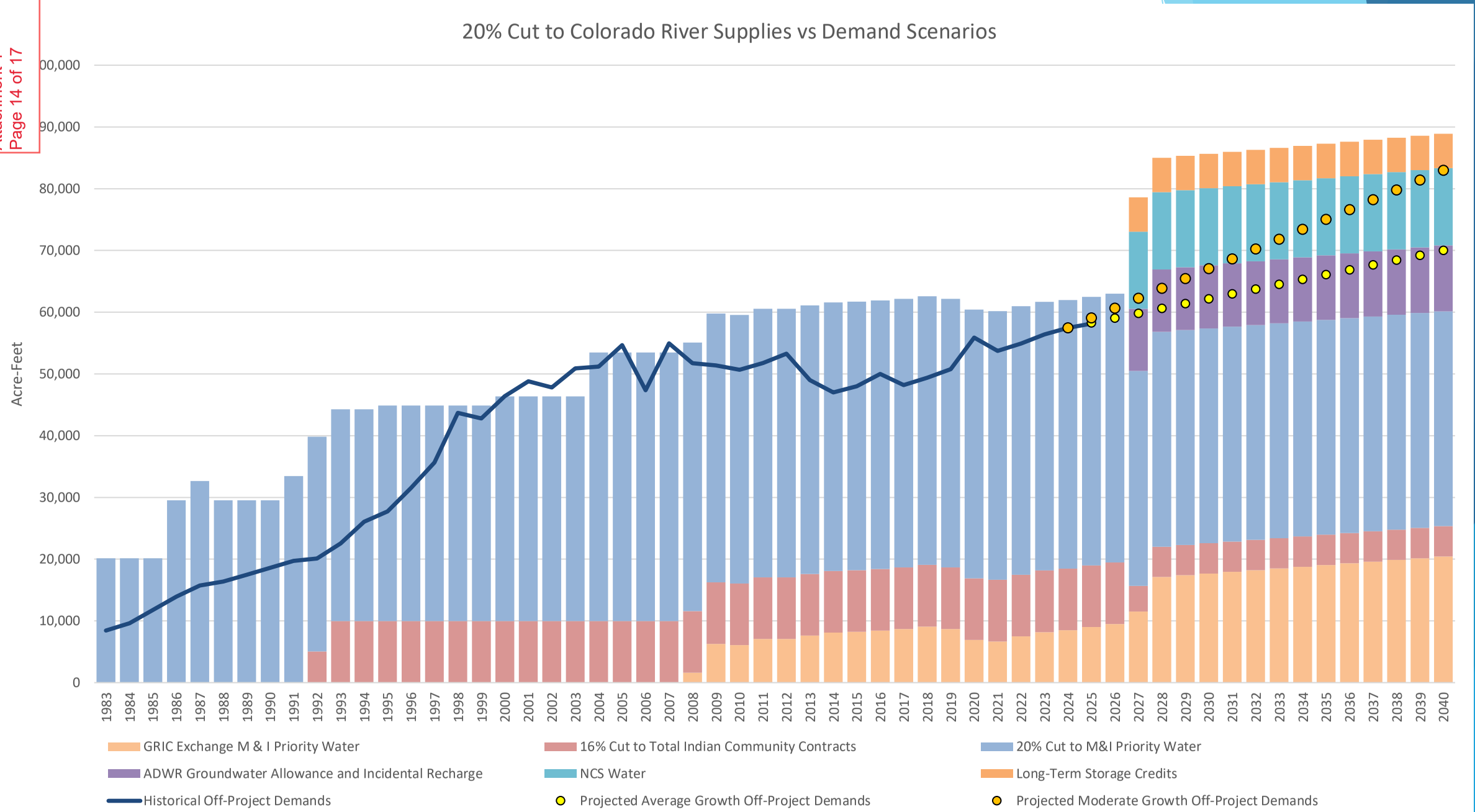
GRIC Exchange M & I Priority Water
16% Cut to Total Indian Community Contracts
20% Cut to M&I Priority Water
Historical Off-Project Demands
Projected Average Growth Off-Project Demands
Projected Moderate Growth Off-Project Demands


20% Cut to Colorado River Supplies vs Demand Scenarios
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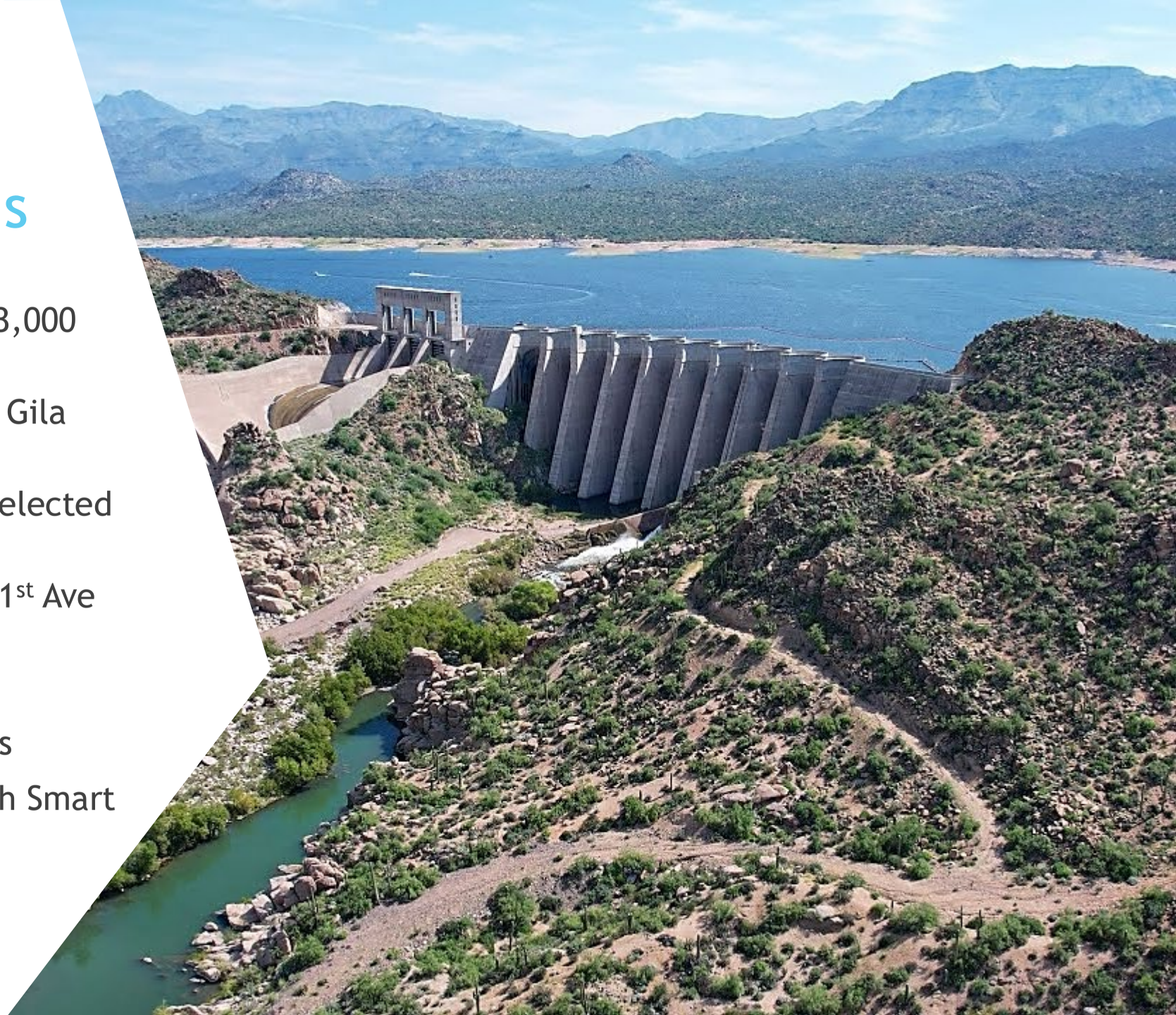
GRIC Exchange M & I Priority Water
16% Cut to Total Indian Community Contracts
20% Cut to M&I Priority Water
ADWR Groundwater Allowance and Incidental Recharge
NCS Water
Long-Term Storage Credits
Historical Off-Project Demands
Projected Average Growth Off-Project Demands
Projected Moderate Growth Off-Project Demands

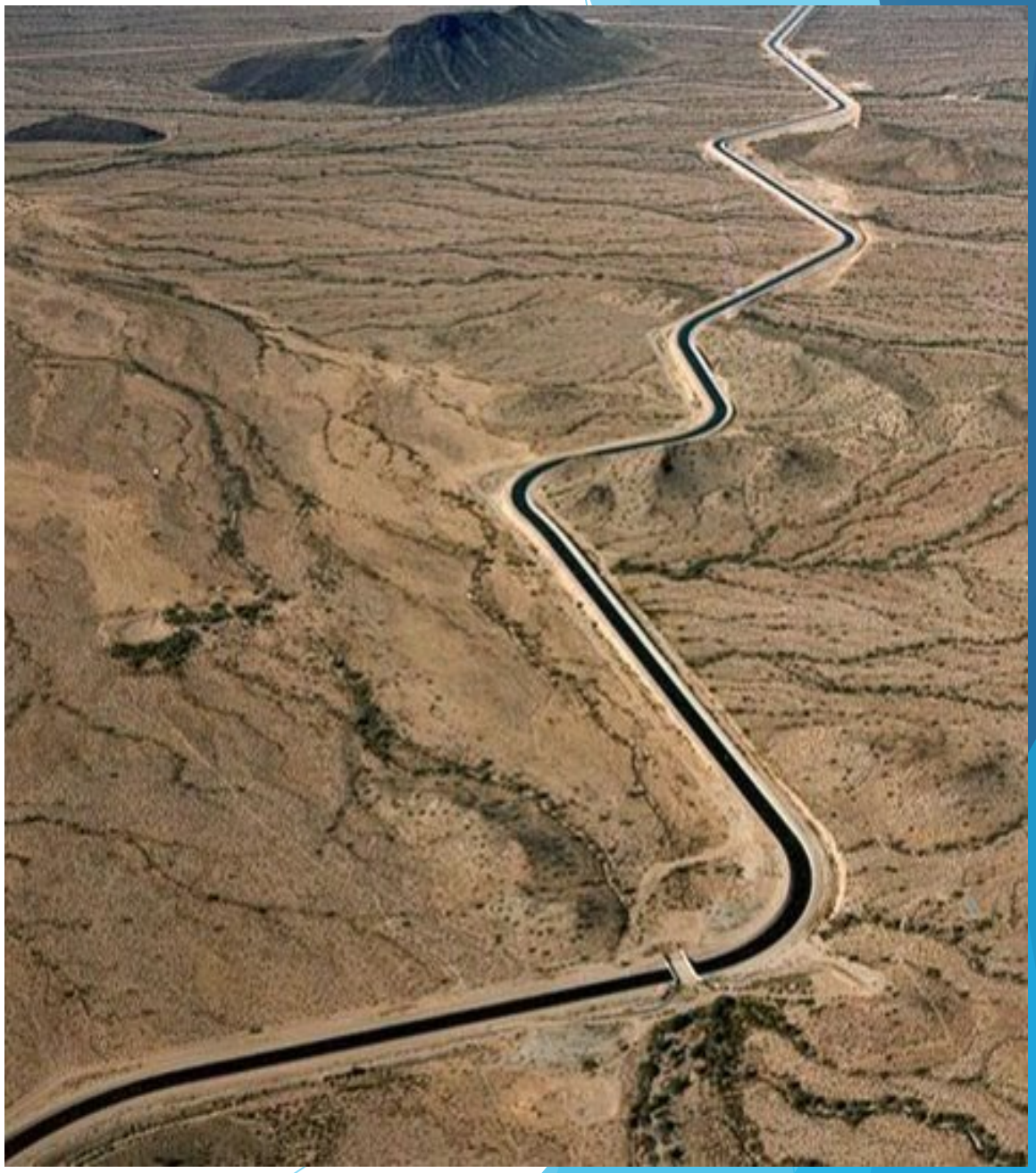
Future Supplies Long-Term Solutions

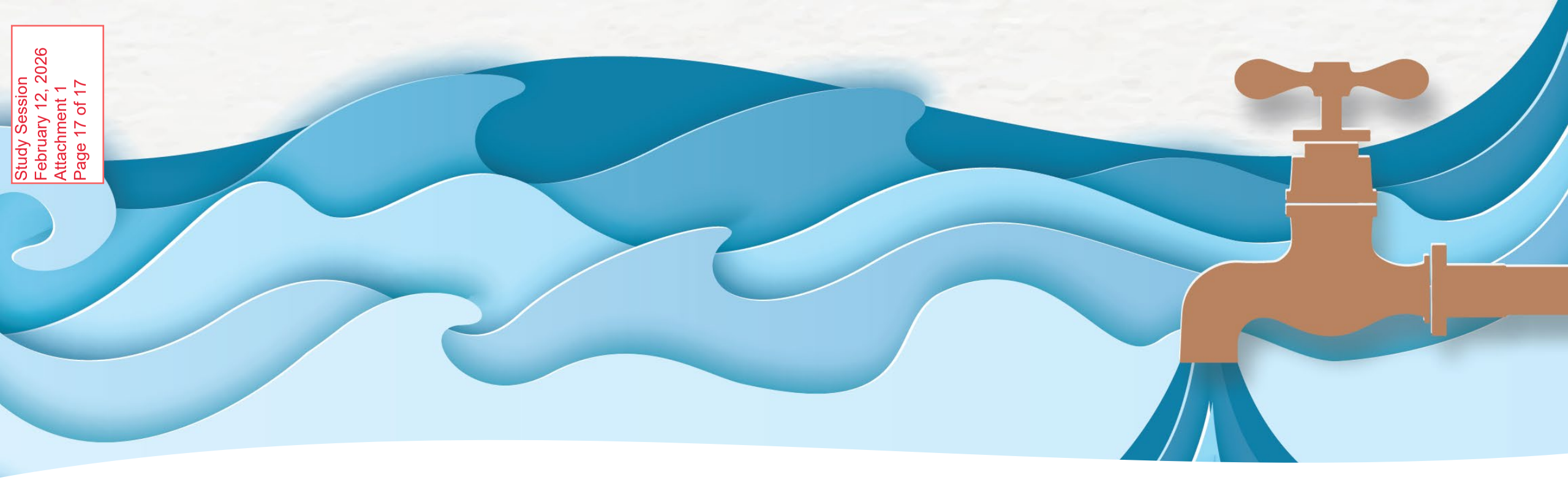
- Raise Bartlett Dam – $150M for 3,000 acre-feet per year average
- Divert more Reuse Water to the Gila River Indian Community
- State led Importation Projects selected by WIFA
- Advanced Water Treatment at 91st Ave WWTP – Exchange Water
- Septic to Sewer
- Continue finding and fixing leaks
- Real time leak detection through Smart metering



Key Takeaways

- The current 20-year Operating Plan for the Colorado River expires at the end of this year
- Additional Supply reductions will be inevitable starting in 2027
- Reductions may be introduced in phases
- Mesa began building a resilient water portfolio a half century ago and continues to add to our supplies
- Future supplies will be expensive as options become more scarce
- Water Conservation is a tool that can temper future demand





mesa·az
WATER RESOURCES

Find fact sheets and more resources online at
mesaaz.gov/water