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Colorado River Indian Tribes Assumes Major Role In Drought Relief Efforts In Arizona and Western U.S.

(PHOENIX) The Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) has been recognized by the Central Arizona Project for signing the System Conservation Agreement with the State of Arizona and its crucial role in drought relief. This took place during the August first Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAP) regular meeting in Phoenix.

To help Arizona fulfill its Drought Contingency Plan obligations the Colorado River Indian Tribes has pledged to fallow farmland in order to contribute 150,000 acre-feet over three years to help maintain water levels in Lake Mead. CRIT will be paid \$38 million as compensation for fallowing 10,000 acres of farm land to make this water available as system conservation.

Chairman Patch said, "CRIT is committed to saving the life of the Colorado River by contributing real water, not water that exists only on paper. Our efforts will help maintain water levels in Lake Mead, which is critical to the DCP."

Vice Chairman Keith Moses said, "This agreement reaffirms CRIT's rights to Colorado River water and ensures we are fairly compensated."

The System Conservation Agreement among the CAP, the State of Arizona, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Colorado River Indian Tribes was recently signed representing a major step in drought relief for Arizona. In April, the basin-wide Drought Contingency Plan was signed into law.

In January, CRIT voters approved a measure that permits the Tribe to lease, not sell, a portion of its Colorado River entitlement. Federal legislation to permit leasing CRIT water would provide further drought relief for Arizona and generate economic opportunities for CRIT and its people.

CRIT has the first priority decreed water right to divert 719,248 acre-feet per year to serve lands in both Arizona and California. System inefficiencies in the BIA Colorado River Irrigation Project, and a lack of infrastructure for agriculture development prevent the Tribes from fully utilizing its water.

About the Colorado River Indian Tribes:

The Colorado River Indian Tribes include four distinct Tribes - the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi, and Navajo. There are currently about 4,434 Tribal members. The CRIT Reservation was created in 1865 by the Federal Government originally for the Mohave and Chemehuevi, who had inhabited the area for centuries. People of the Hopi and Navajo Tribes were relocated to the reservation in later years. The reservation stretches along the Colorado River on both the Arizona and California side. It includes approximately 300,000 acres of land, with the river serving as the focal point and lifeblood of the area.