

For Immediate Release
March 21, 2022

Contact:
Mike Scerbo
Rose and Allyn Public and Online Relations
Mobile: 602.615.6523
Email: mscrerbo@roseallynpr.com



Colorado River Indian Tribes To Testify Before U.S. Senate In Support Of Federal Legislation That Would Enable The Tribe To Assist With Critical Drought Relief

Senate Committee On Indian Affairs Meets March 23rd To Hear Testimony On The Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act

(WASHINGTON DC) Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) Chairwoman Amelia Flores is set to address the U.S. Senate March 23rd in support of a bill that would enable the Tribe to assist Arizona with Colorado River water for critical drought relief while preserving the life of the river and strengthen tribal sovereignty.

Chairwoman Flores will testify before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 2:30pm Eastern Time (11:30am Arizona Time).

The Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act of 2021(S.3308) would create the authority for CRIT to further exercise its water rights. This authority would enable CRIT to allocate its water resources to provide a short-term water supply for entities experiencing drought or shortages across Arizona and protect natural habitats along the Colorado River. The legislation provides CRIT similar rights many federally recognized tribes across the country currently enjoy and benefit from.

CRIT has demonstrated its ability to assist with drought relief without reducing the amount of water flow in the Colorado River through beneficial agreements, like the Drought Contingency Plan and similar federal pilot programs, by making water available through continued conservation efforts already implemented.

Chairwoman Flores said, "The Colorado River is the lifeblood of our community, and this legislation helps preserve the life of the river while providing much needed drought relief. CRIT can provide real hope with real water as we all deal with the challenges presented by an unrelenting drought."

S.3308 was introduced by Senator Mark Kelly and is co-sponsored by Senator Kyrsten Sinema. The bill has been endorsed by the Salt River Project, the Central Arizona

Project, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association, and Arizona House Speaker Representative Russell Bowers.

Prior to the introduction of the bill, the Arizona Department of Water Resources held public hearings on water leasing legislation. Supporters included:

- The Water for Arizona Coalition
- The National Audubon Society
- The cities of Phoenix, Gilbert, and Peoria
- The Mohave County Board of Supervisors
- The Pinal County Board of Supervisors

CRIT has the first priority decreed water right to divert 719,248 acre-feet per year to serve tribal lands in both Arizona and California. It has the resources to maintain on-reservation needs and to assist in maintaining the water levels in Lake Mead AND assist in direct drought relief to Arizona communities at the same time.

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 4,572 Tribal members. The CRIT Reservation was created in 1865 by the Federal Government for "Indians of the Colorado River and its tributaries," 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.