

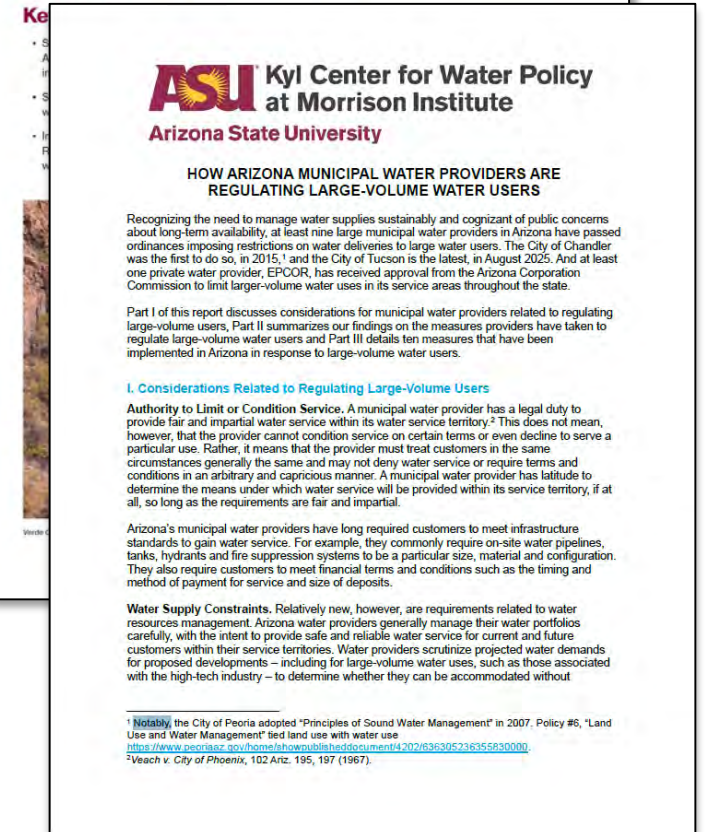
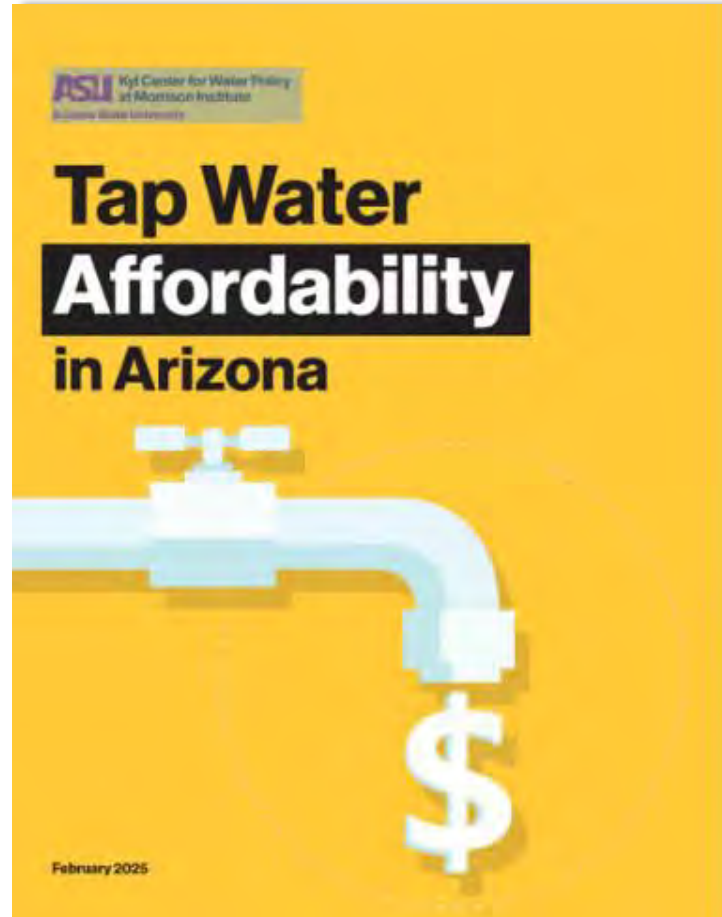
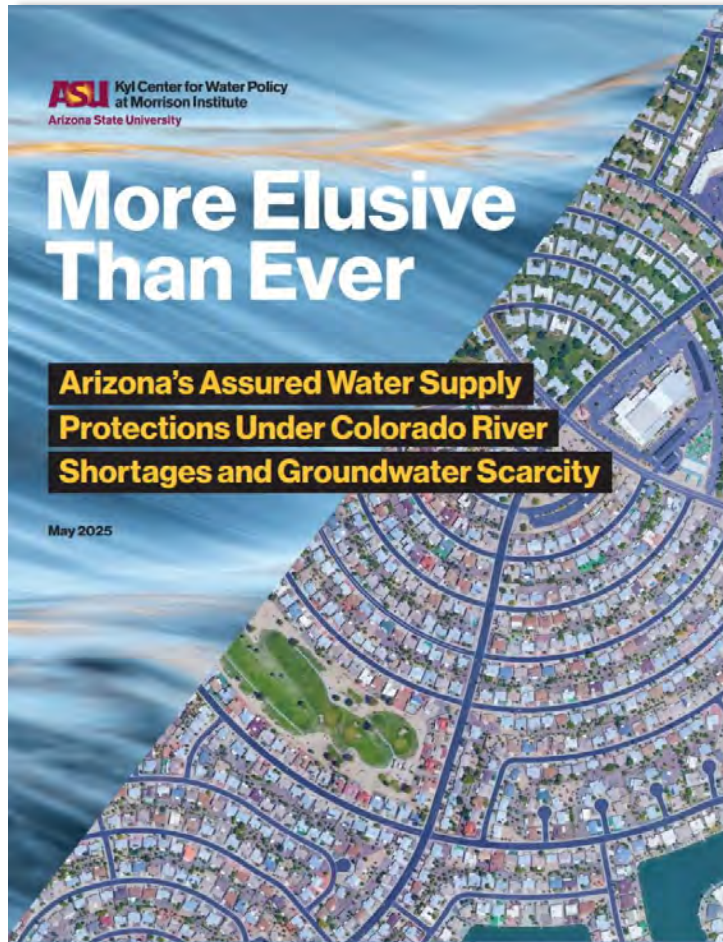
Arizona's changing water landscape

Sarah Porter – November 12, 2025

Mission: promote informed public dialogue on critical **water issues in Arizona and the West**

- **neutral & non-partisan**
- **research & analysis**
- **historical understanding**

Recent Publications





Arizona **Water** **Blueprint**

azwaterblueprint.asu.edu



Some Basics

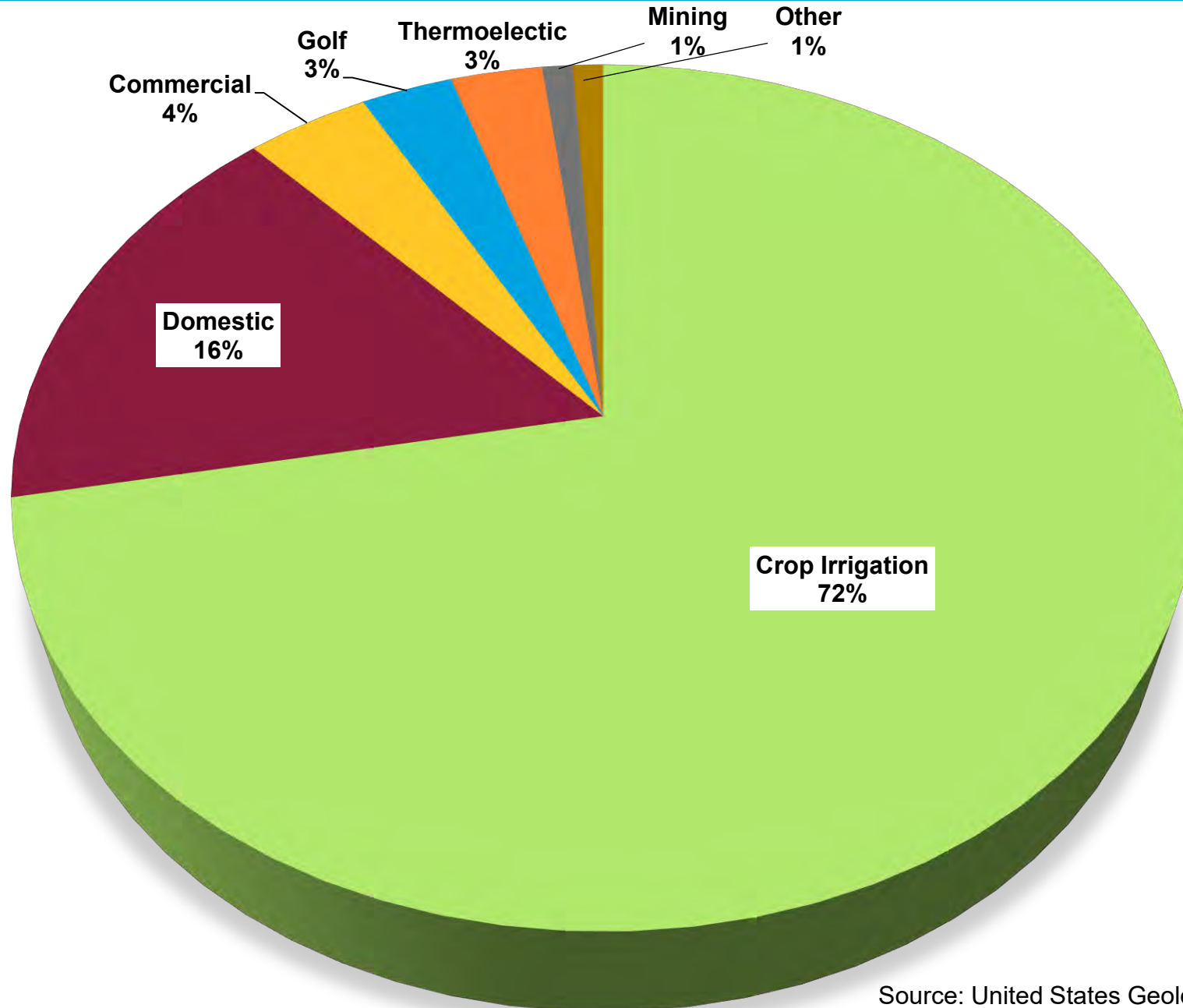
The Challenges

Responses to the Challenges

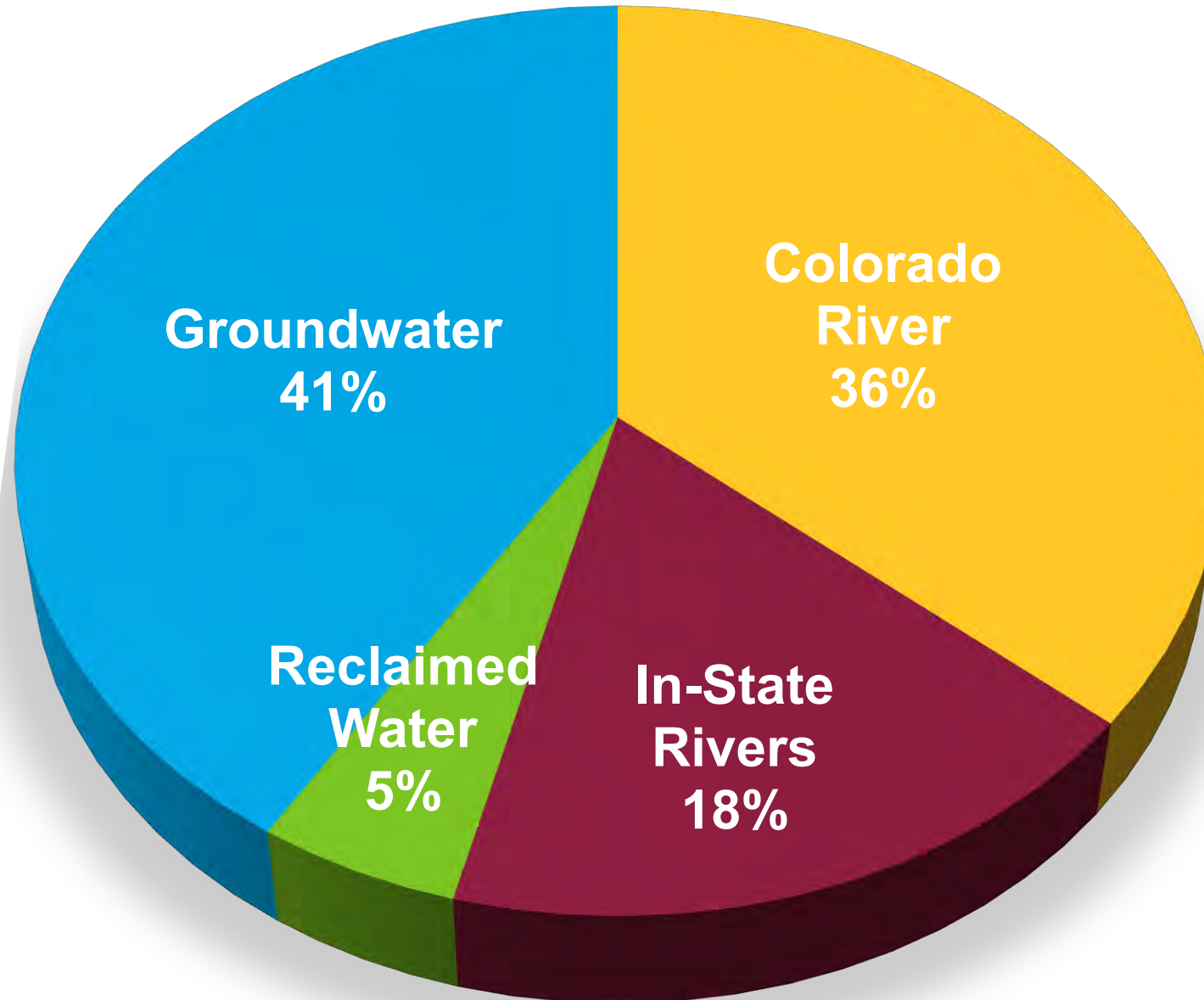
What's next

Some Basics

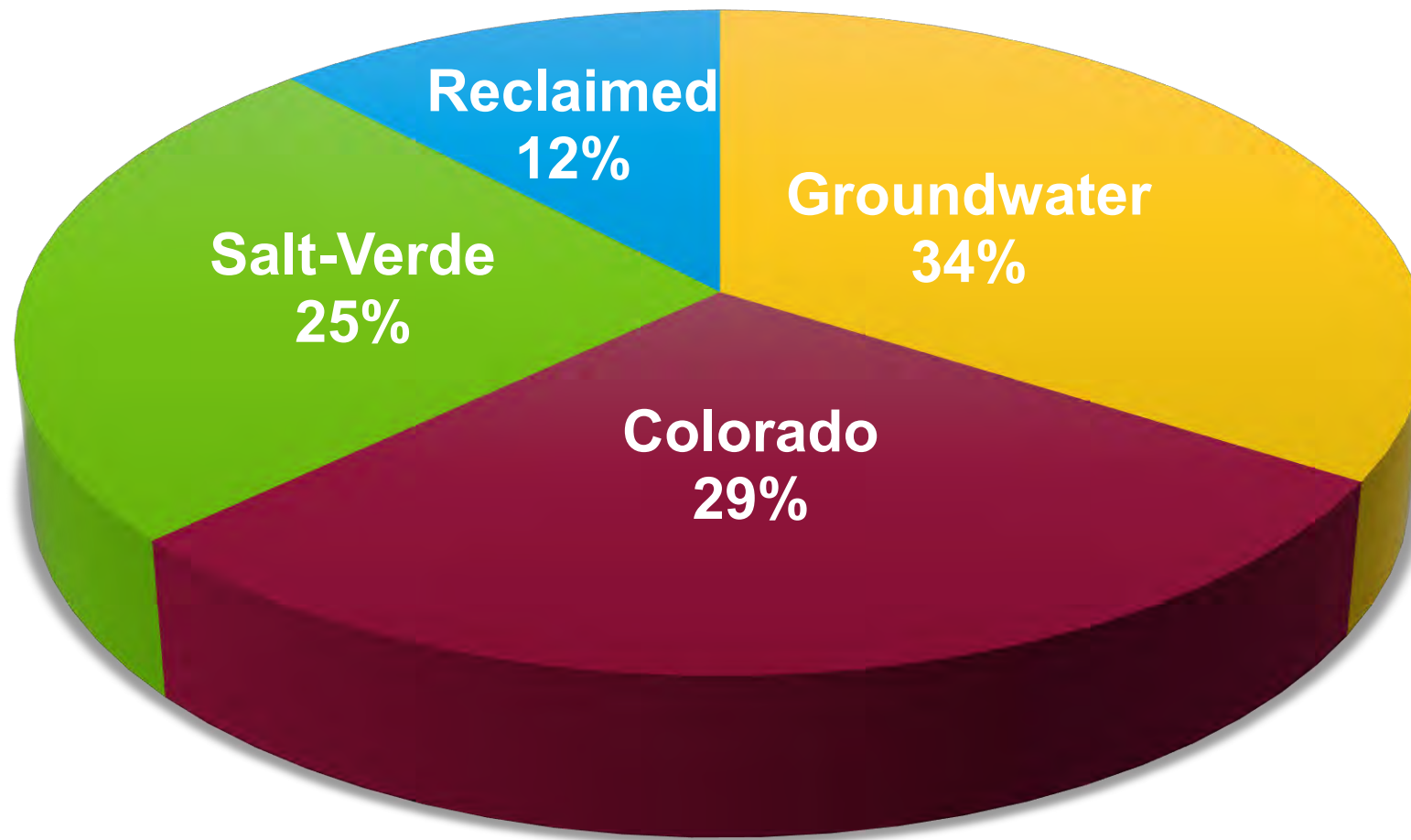
Water Use in Arizona



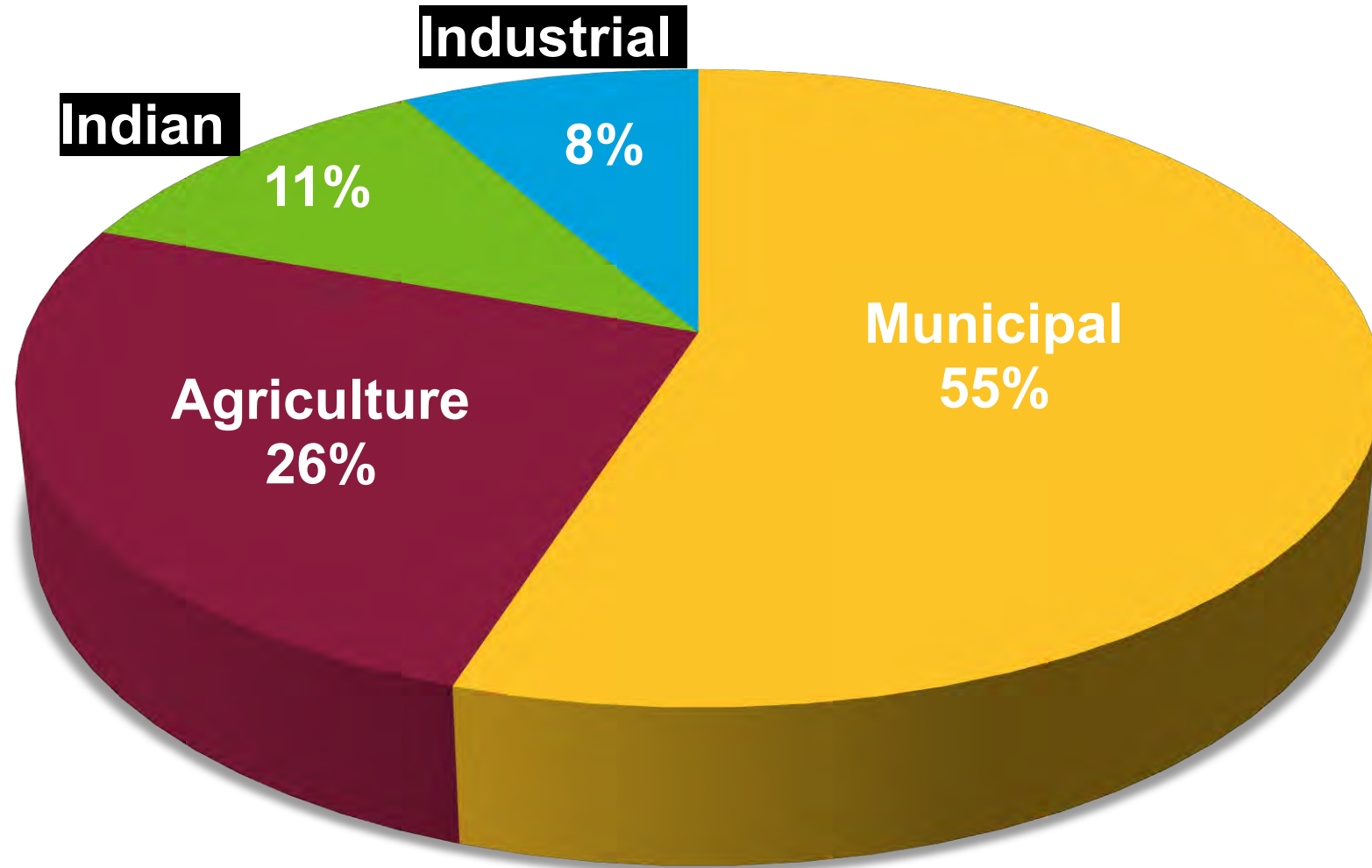
Arizona's Sources of Water



Phoenix Area Sources of Water



Phoenix Area Water Demand by Sector





**Colorado River
water is used along
the mainstem and
in Central Arizona.**

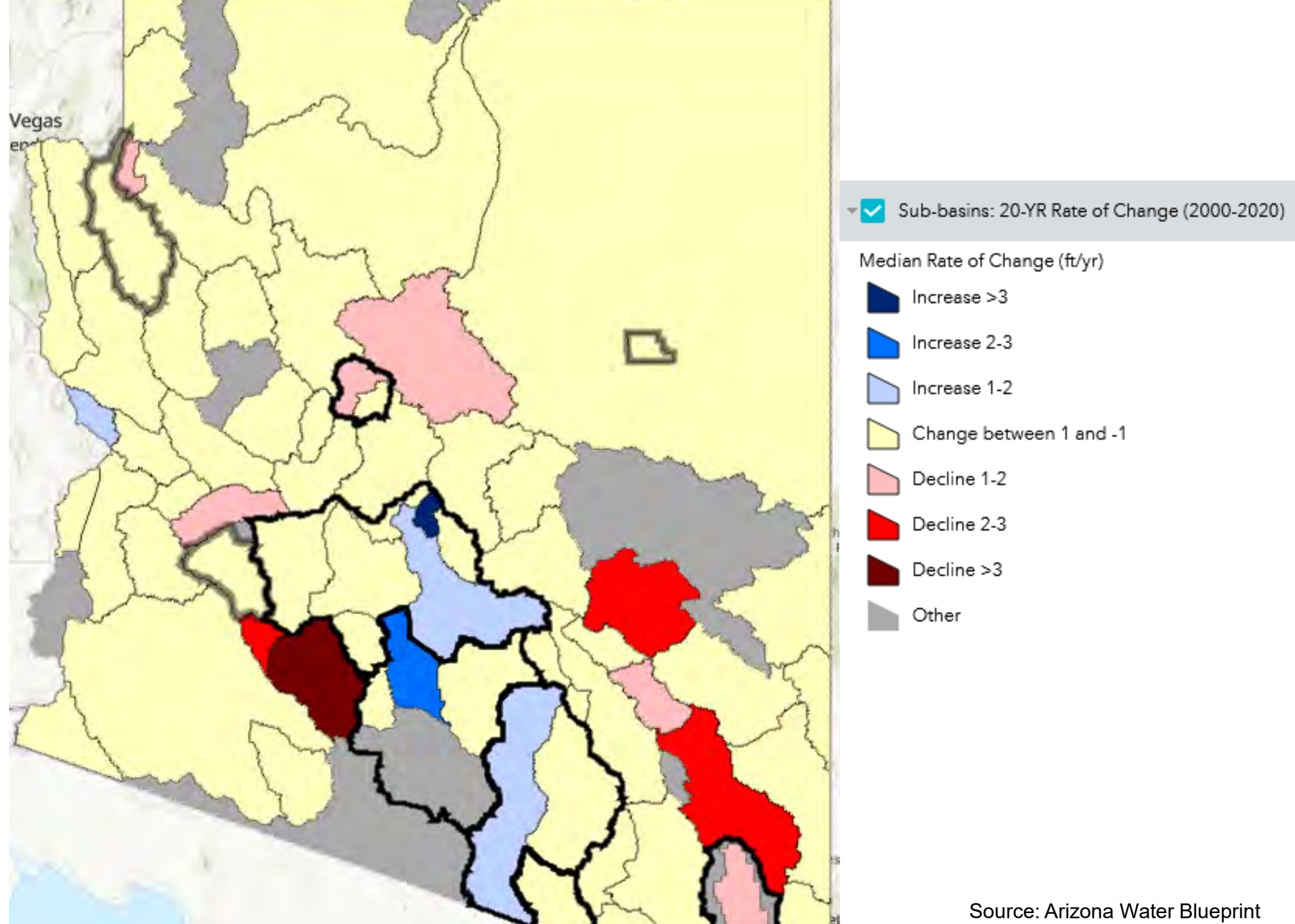
Groundwater use is regulated only in AMAs and INAs.



Challenges

Rural Groundwater

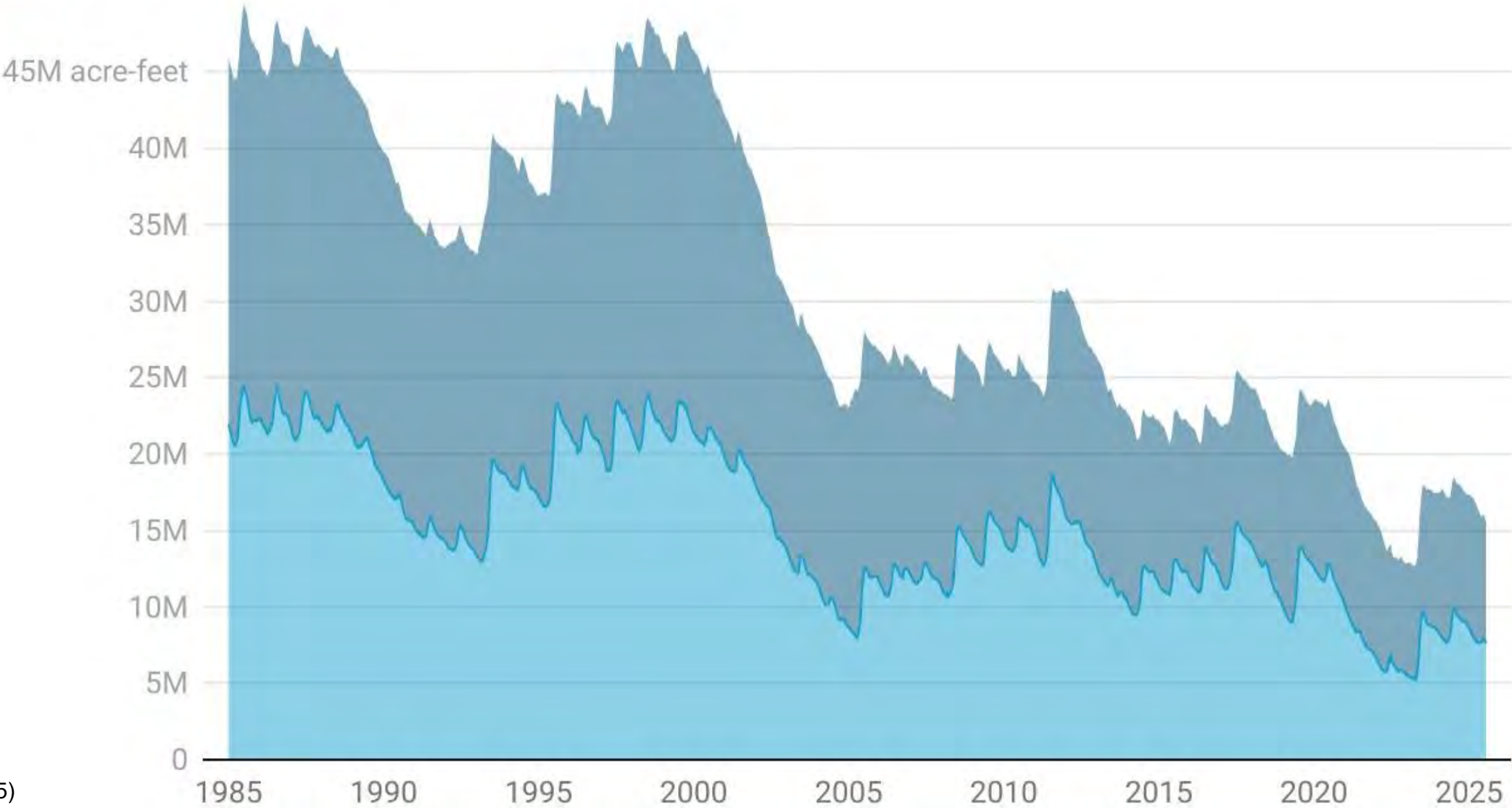




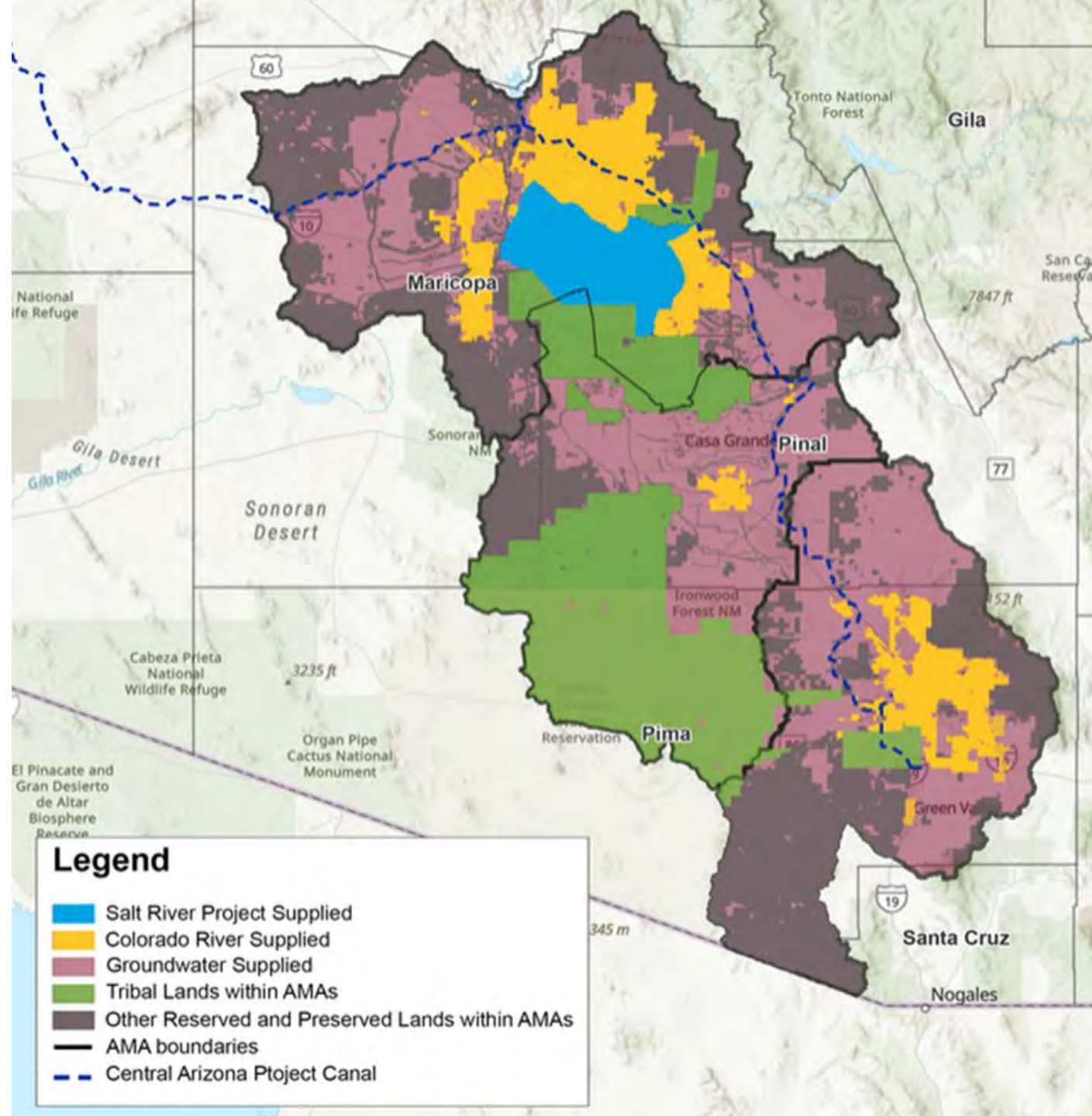
Colorado River

Storage in Lakes Powell and Mead, 1985 - 2025

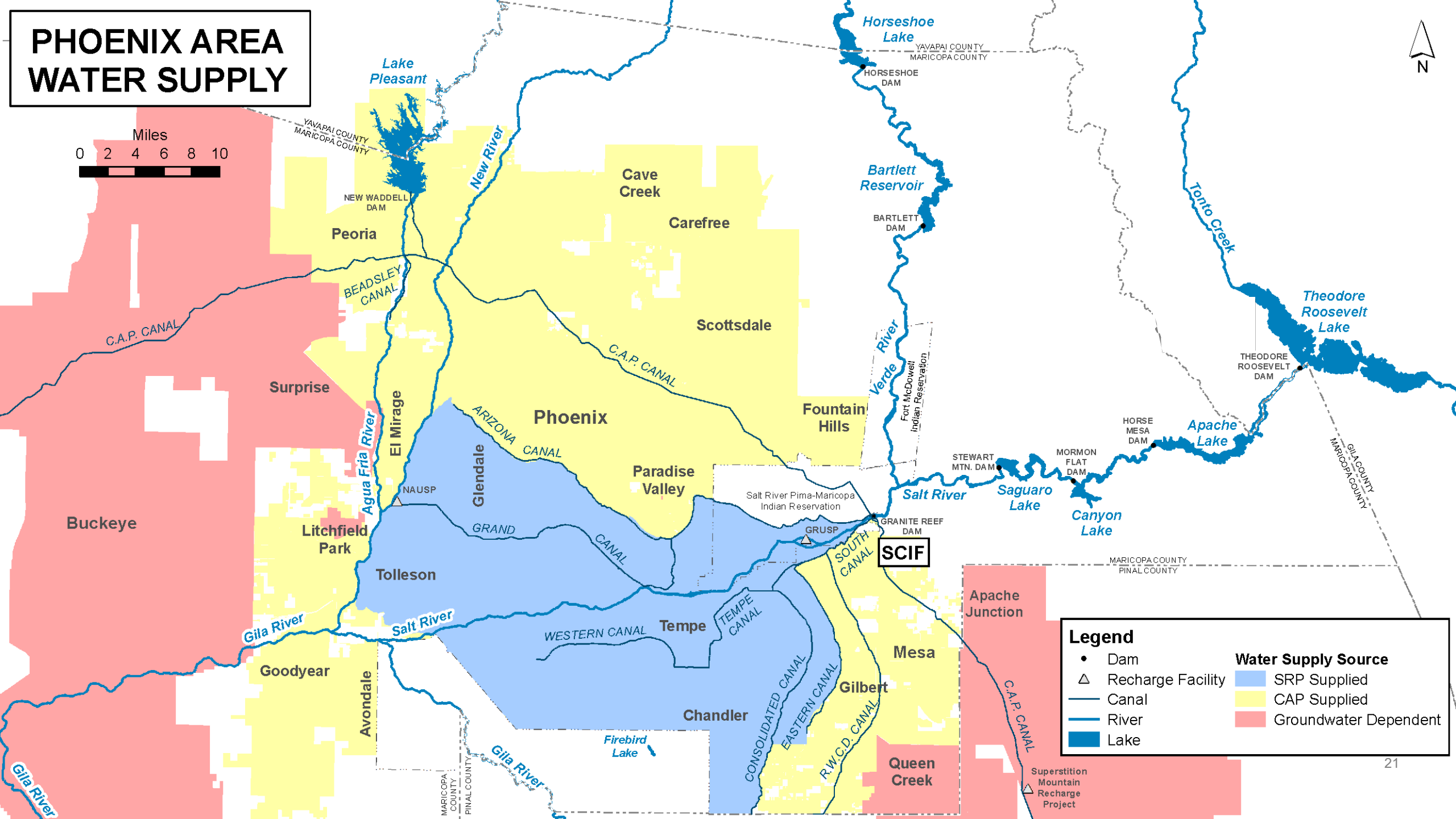
■ Lake Powell ■ Lake Mead







PHOENIX AREA WATER SUPPLY



Legend

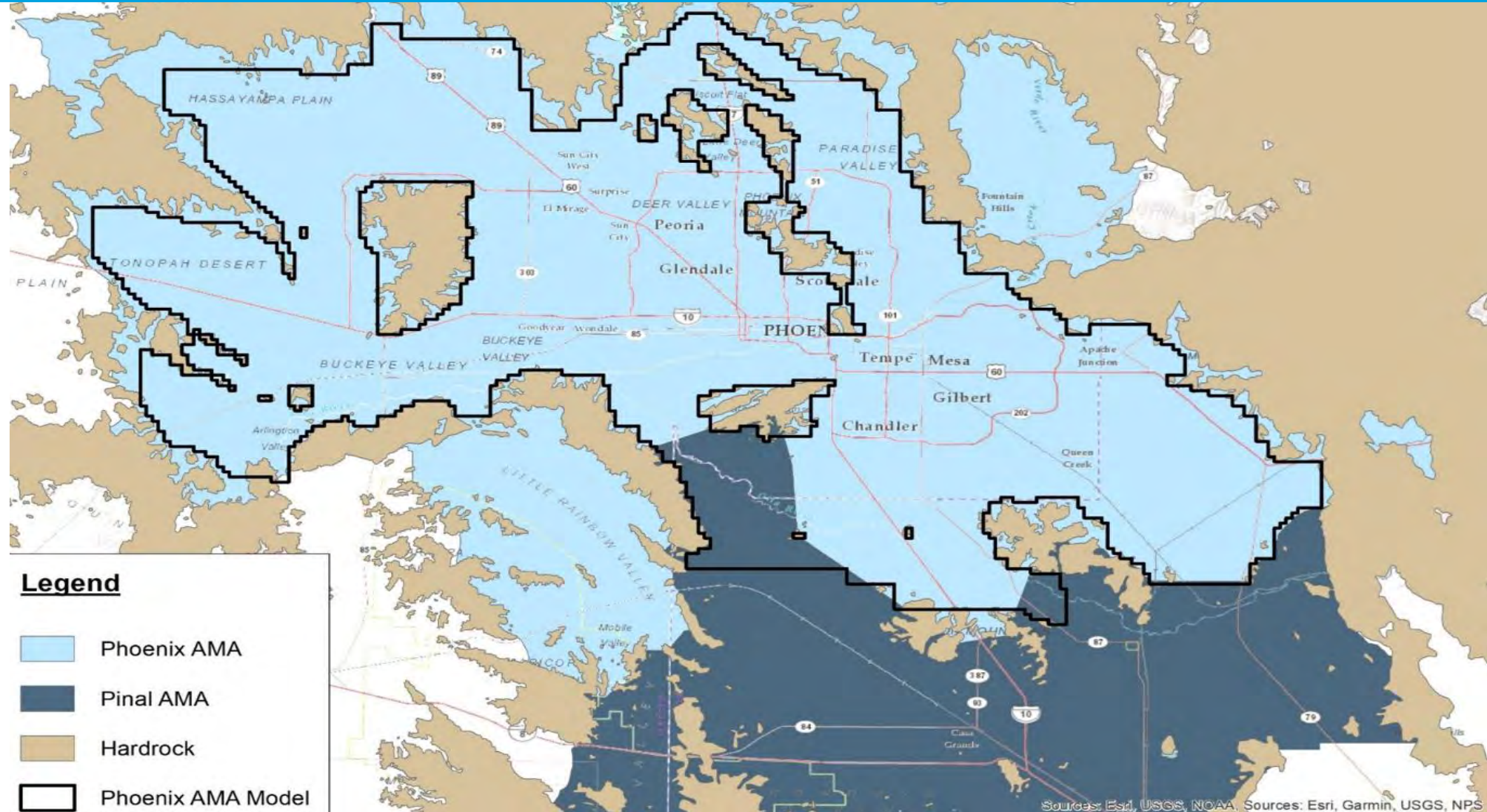
- Dam
- △ Recharge Facility
- Canal
- River
- Lake

Water Supply Source

- SRP Supplied
- CAP Supplied
- Groundwater Dependent

Assured Water Supply

The 2023 Phoenix AMA Model



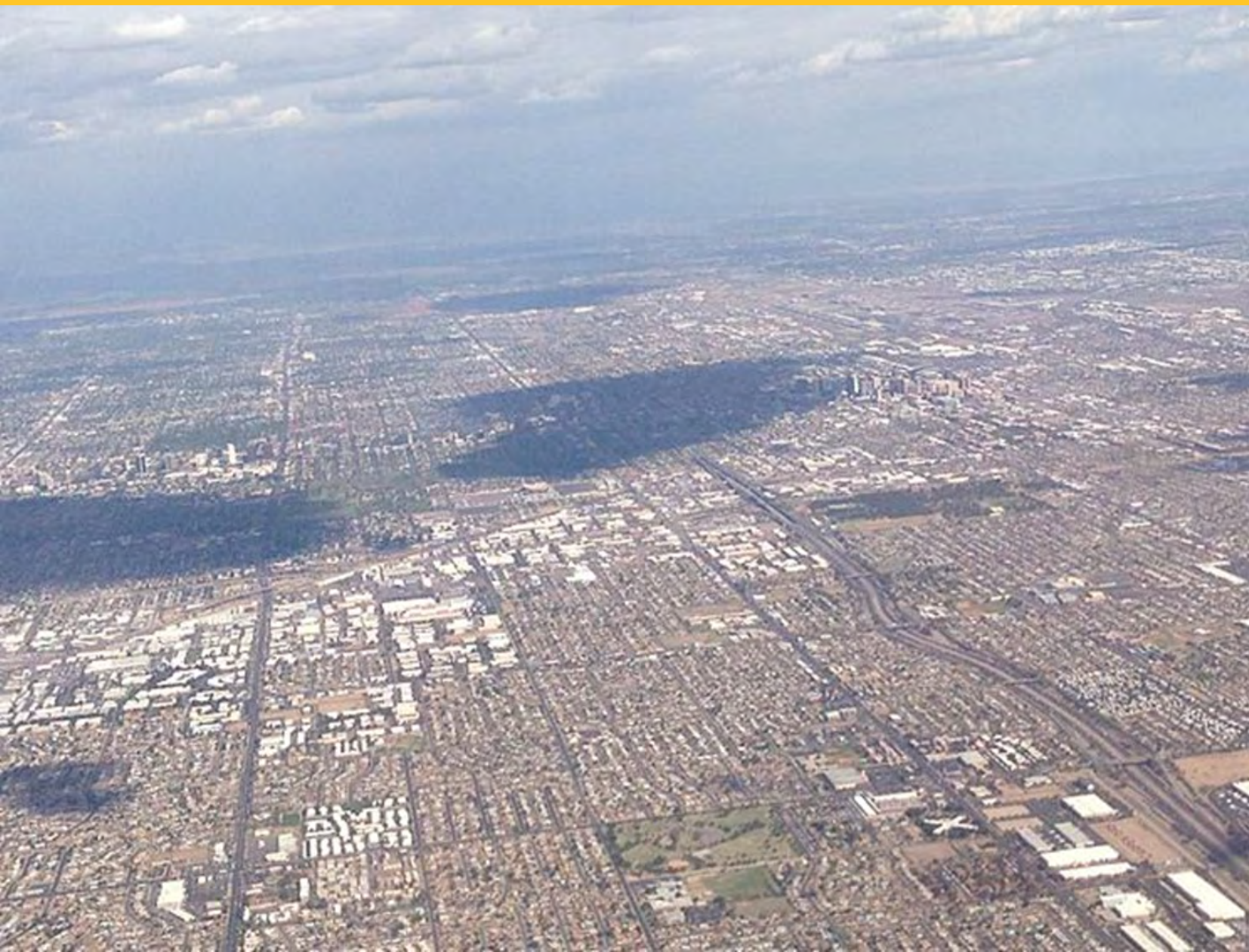
What is an Assured Water Supply?



Determination by ADWR that:

- 1) sufficient water of adequate quality is physically, continuously and legally available to meet demand for 100 years**
- 2) any projected groundwater use is consistent with AMA management plan -- and --**
- 3) provider has financial capacity to build facilities, treat and deliver the water.**

How do developers meet AWS requirements?

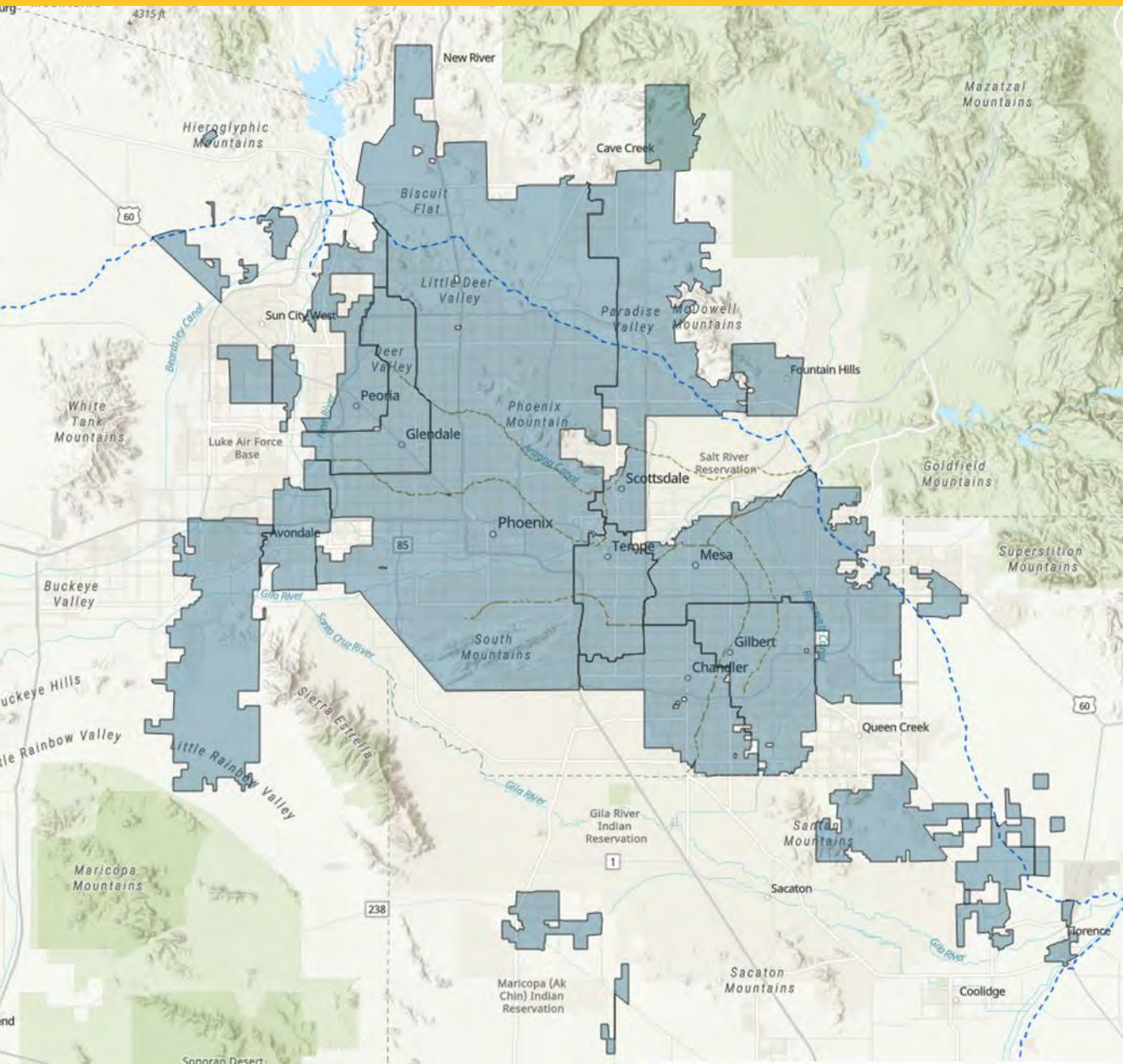


**1) Letter of Commitment
from AWS Designated
Provider**

-- or --

**2) Certificate of Assured
Water Supply from
ADWR**

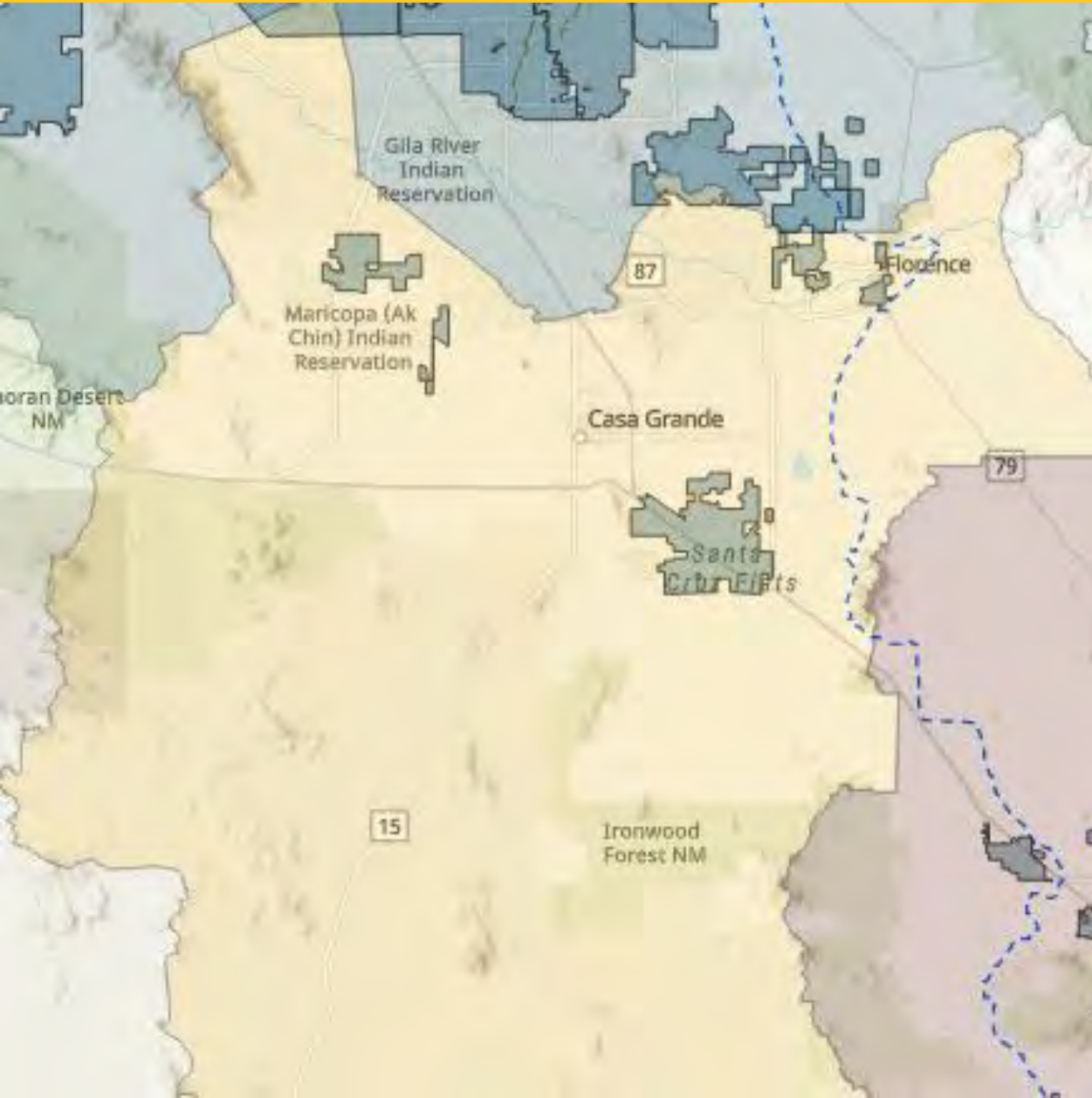
Phoenix AMA AWS Designated Providers



Designated Providers in Phoenix AMA

Phoenix
Avondale
Chandler
El Mirage
Gilbert
Glendale
Goodyear
Mesa
Peoria
Scottsdale
Surprise
Tempe
EPCOR Fountain Hills
EPCOR San Tan
Apache Junction Water Co.

Pinal AMA AWS Designated Providers



Designated Providers in Pinal AMA

Florence

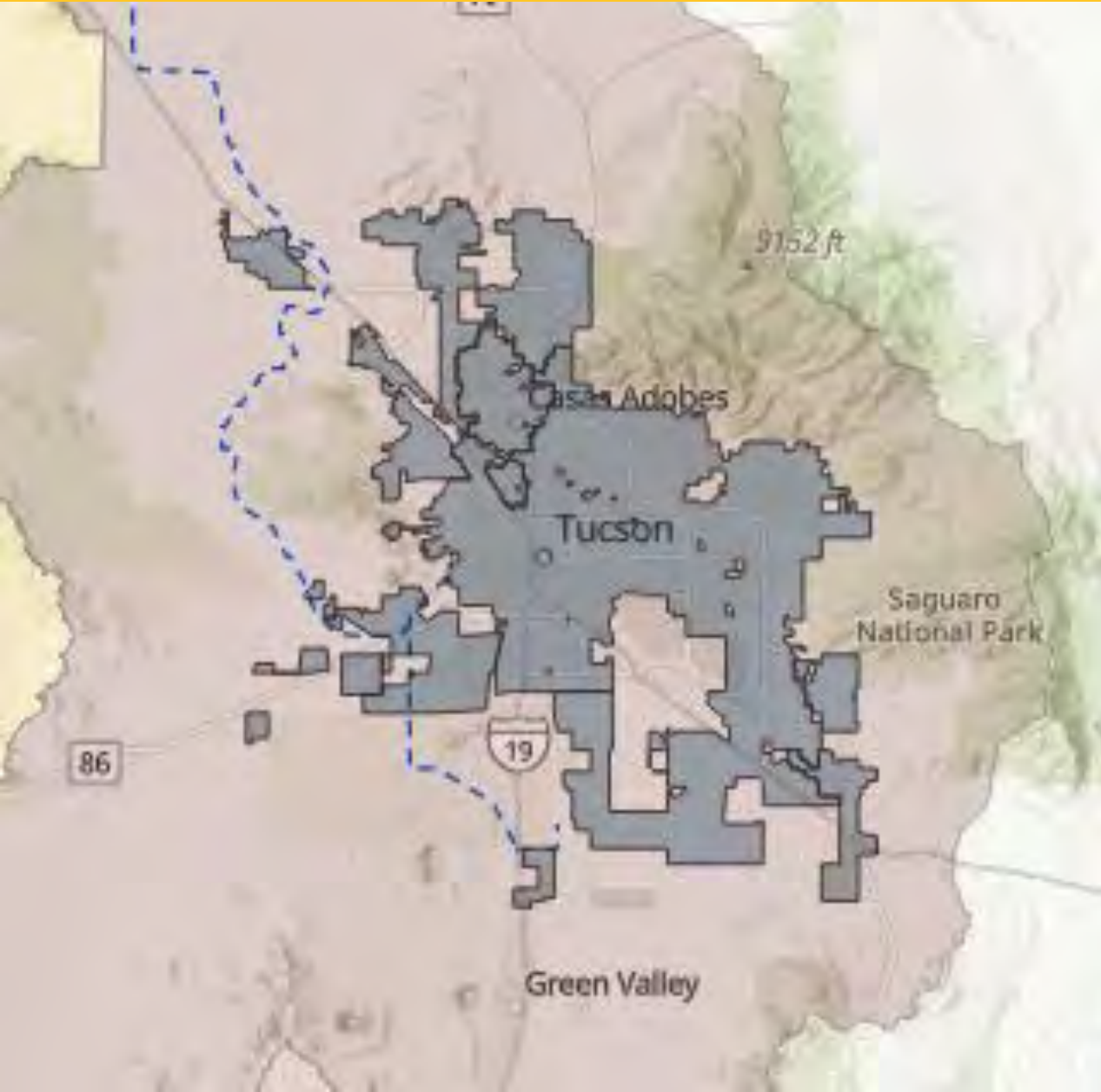
Eloy

Global Water Co. Santa Cruz

Casa Grande

EPCOR San Tan

Tucson AMA AWS Designated Providers



Designated Providers in Tucson AMA

Tucson

Marana

Oro Valley

Flowing Wells ID

Metropolitan DWID – Main

Metropolitan DWID – West

Metropolitan DWID – Diablo Village

Sahuarita Water Co.

Spanish Trail Water Co.

Vail Water Co.

Willow Springs Utilities

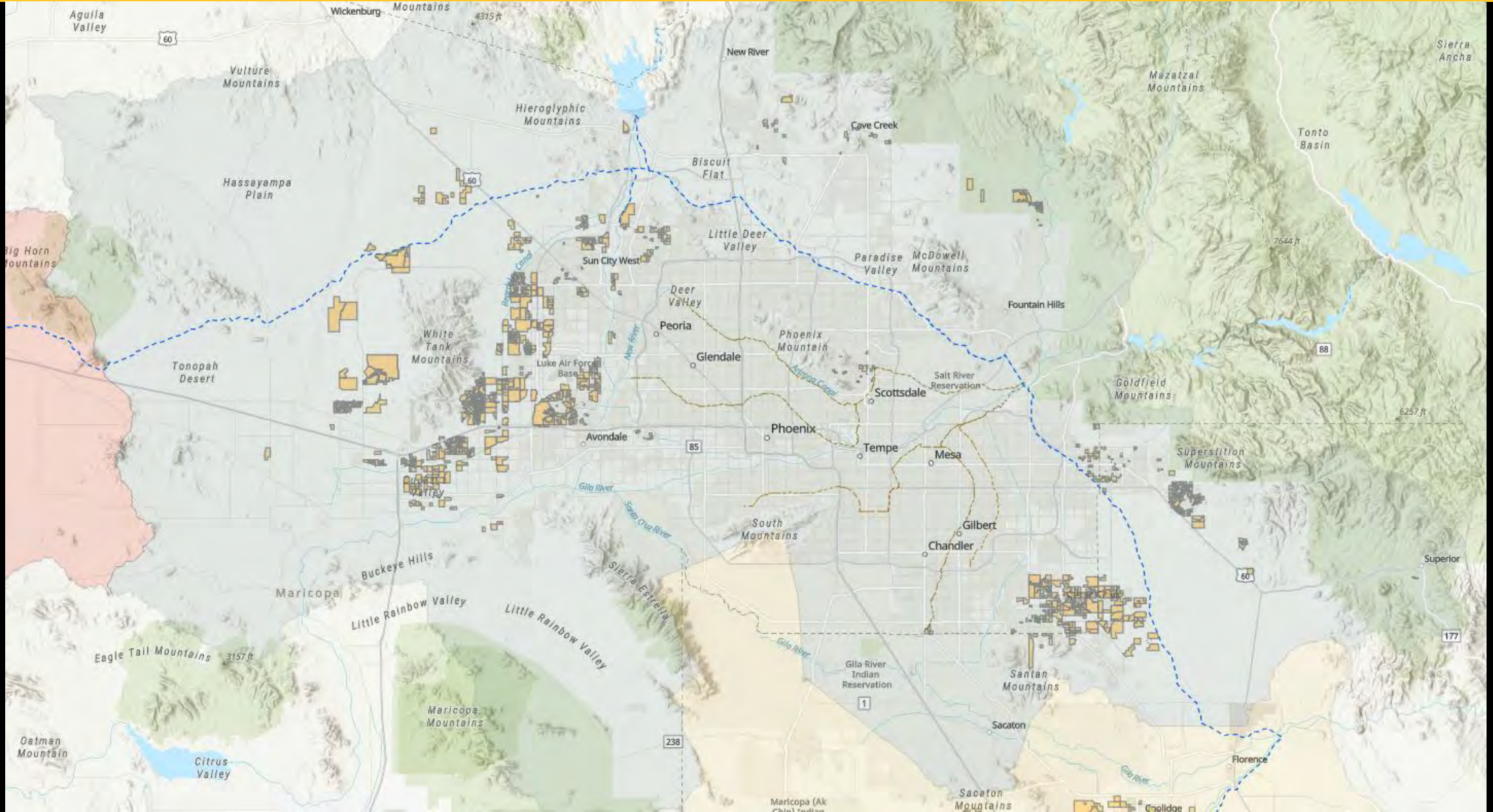
Outside of AWS Designated Providers



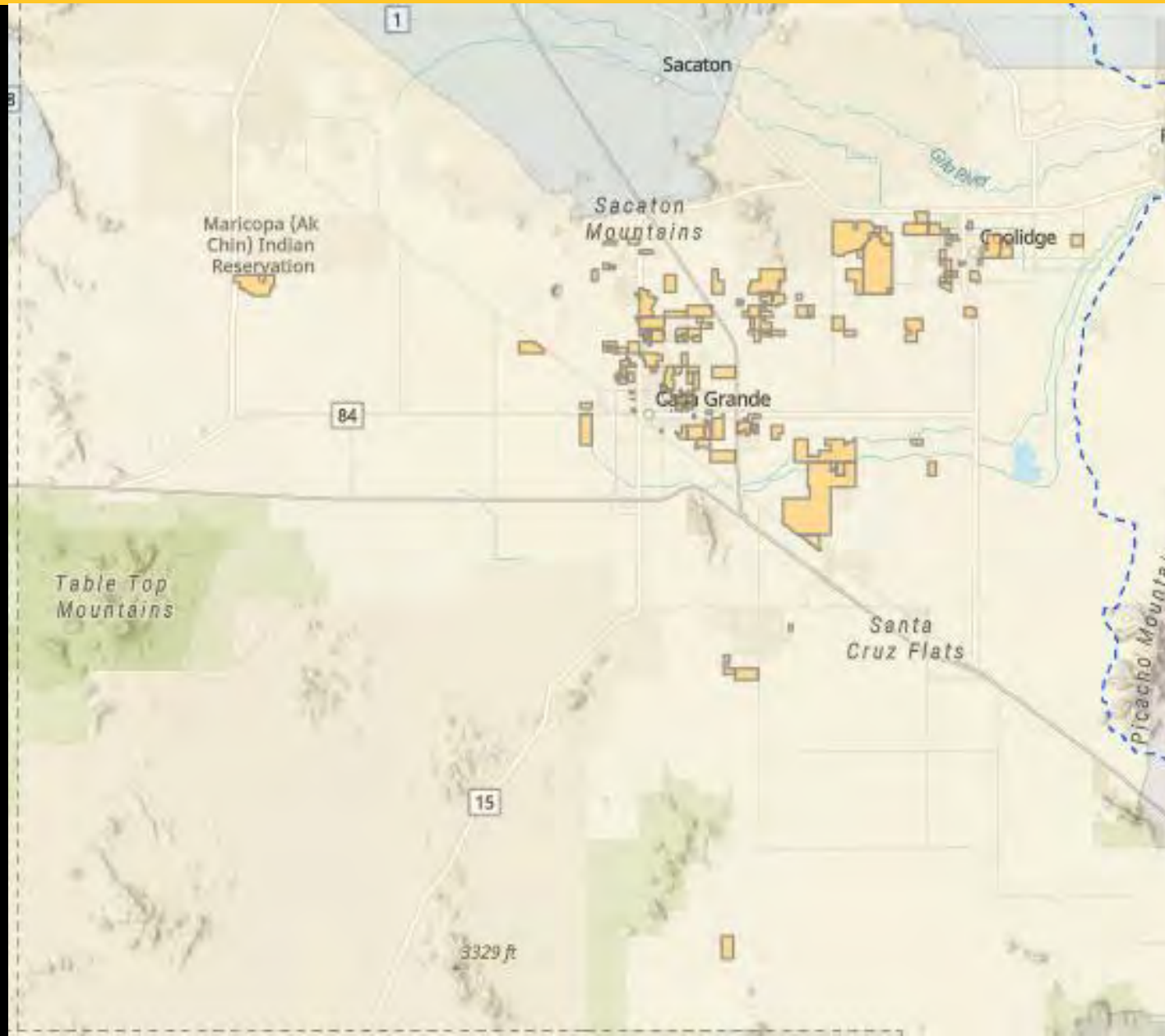
Certificates of Assured Water Supply

- Required for any subdivision within AMA of 6 or more lots for sale.
- Historically, developers have preferred local groundwater to meet AWS requirements.
- No periodic review of Certificate (once and done).

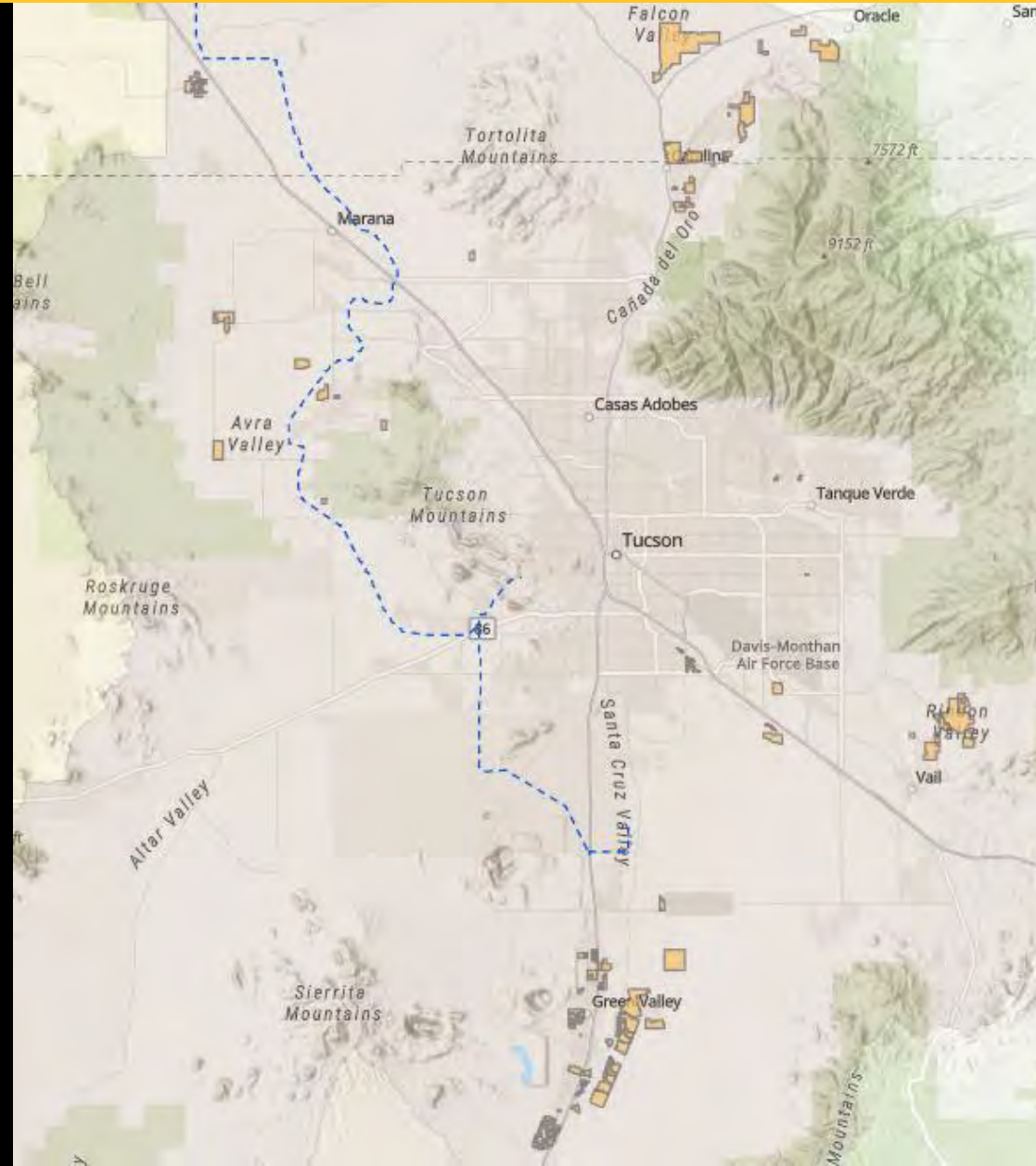
Phoenix AMA AWS Certificates



Pinal AMA AWS Certificates



Tucson AMA AWS Certificates



**What are the
responses?**

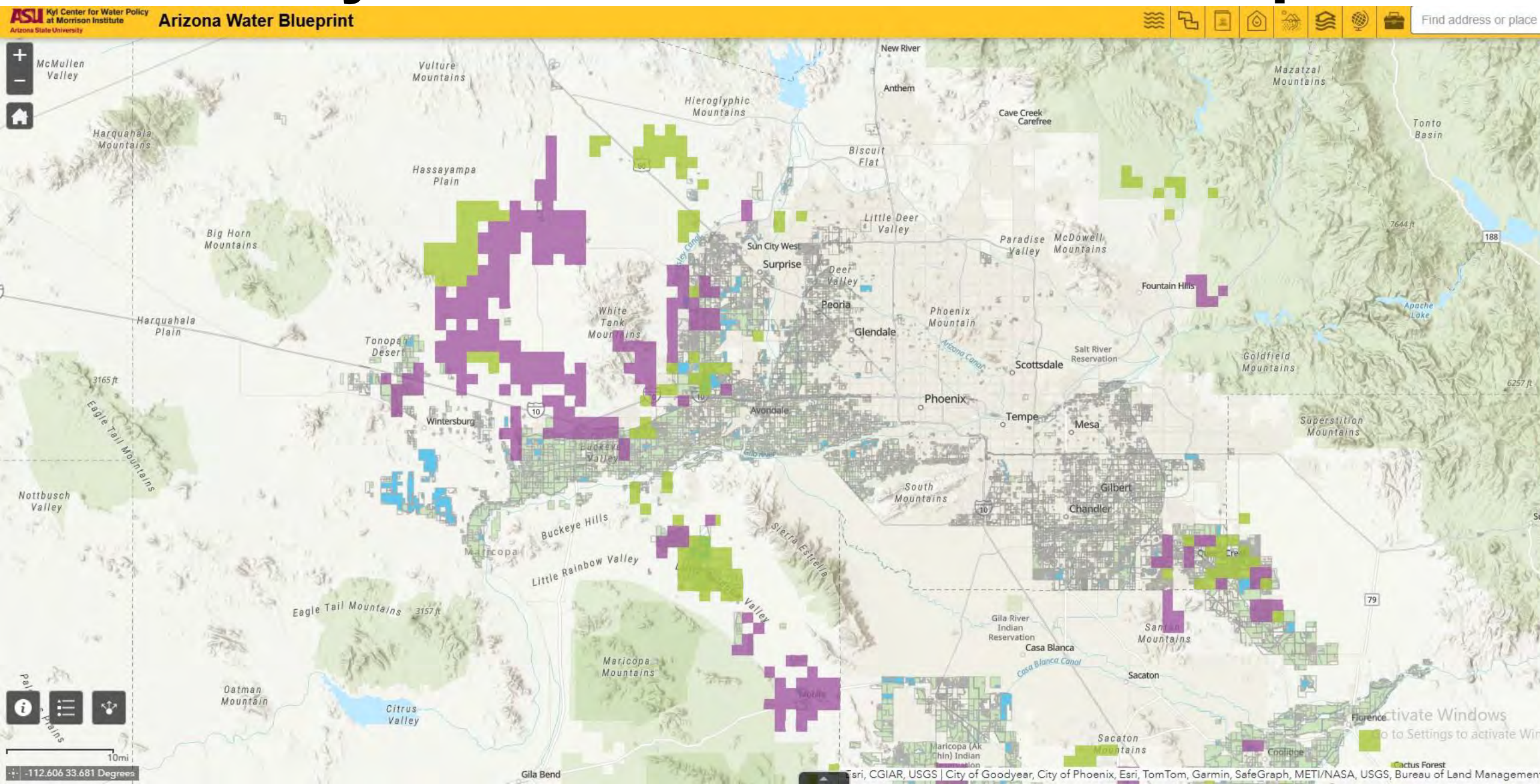
‘Ag-to-Urban’ clears Legislature, paves way for new water strategy

Jamar Younger // June 28, 2025

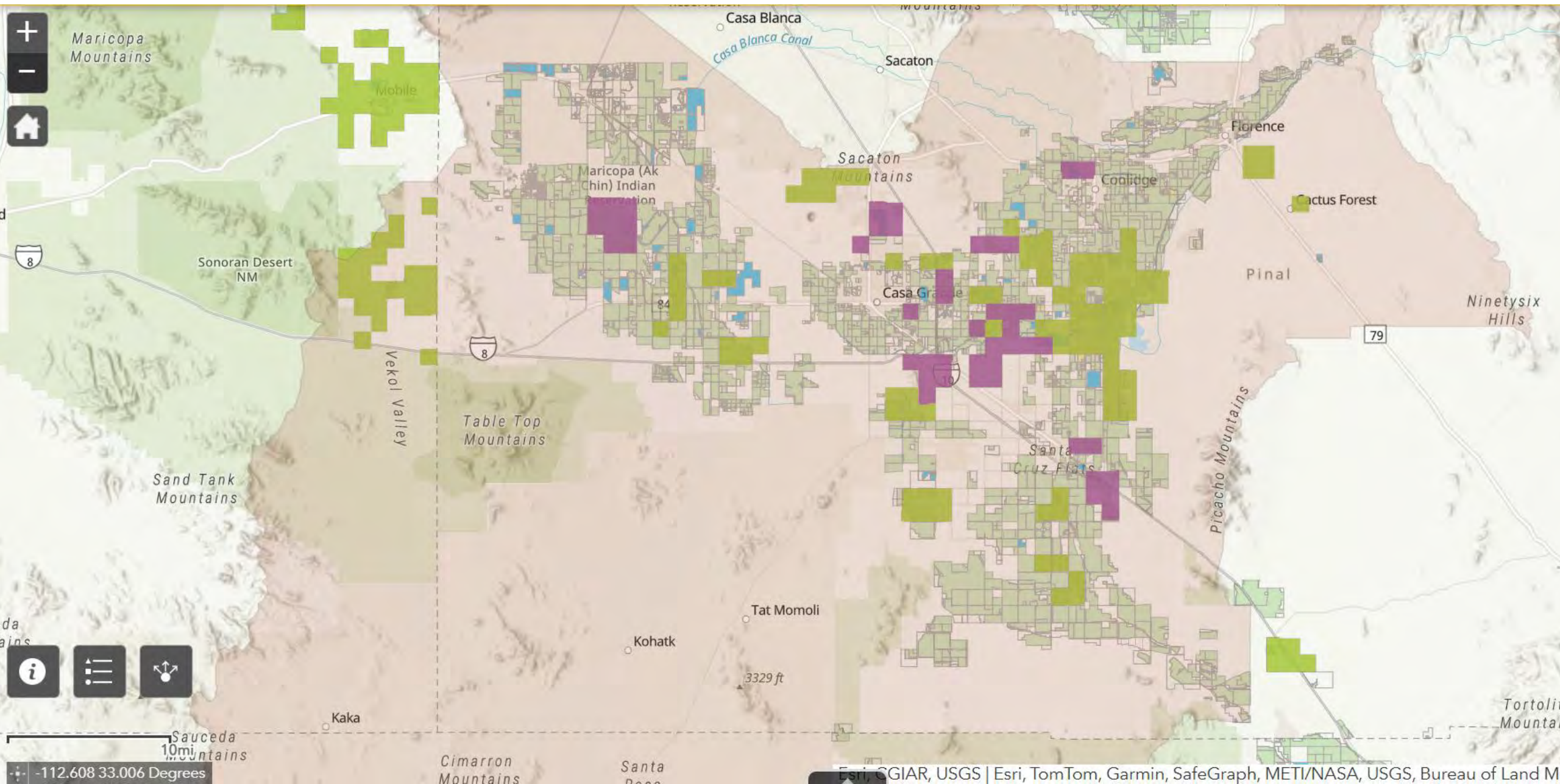
“ When the legislation passed the Senate on June 19, Shope hailed it as the **most consequential groundwater measure** since the Groundwater Management Act of 1980.

‘The Ag-to-Urban program is a win-win for farmers who are ready to retire but still want to capitalize on their land and for Arizona families looking to obtain their American dream through homeownership,’ Shope said after the bill passed the Senate.

Proximity of IGFRs to Future Development



Proximity of IGFRs to Future Development



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Attorneys for Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA**

HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF
CENTRAL ARIZONA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF WATER
RESOURCES, an agency of the State of
Arizona; THOMAS BUSCHATZKE,
Director of the Arizona Department of Water
Resources, in his official capacity,

Defendants.

Case No.

**COMPLAINT FOR
DECLARATORY AND
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Speaker Steve Montenegro (R-29)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Monday, March 10, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives Sues Rogue Water Agency for Illegal Rules that Increase Housing Costs

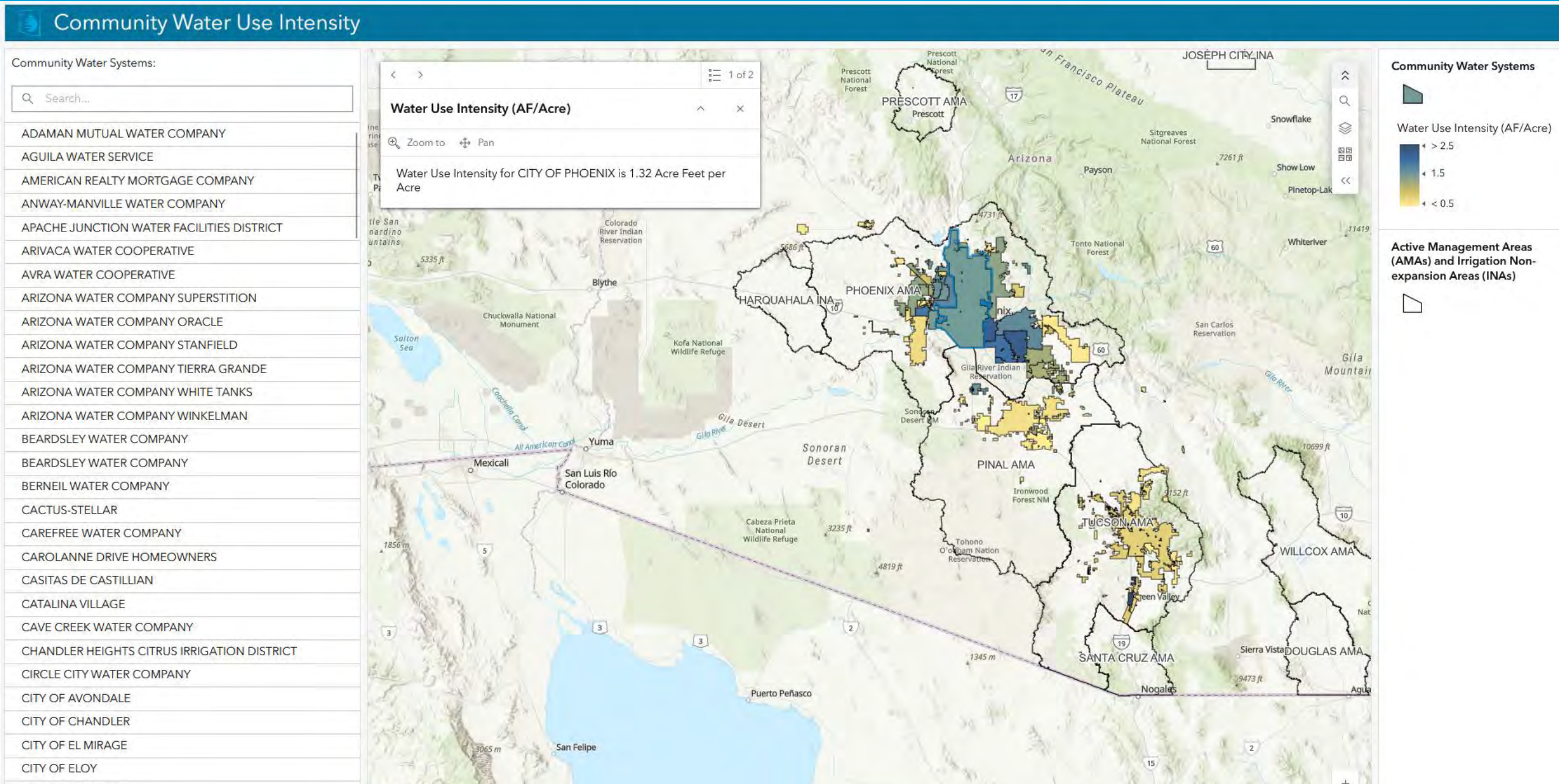
STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Arizona House Speaker Steve Montenegro announced today that the Arizona House of Representatives, in partnership with the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona (HBACA) and the Arizona Senate, has filed a lawsuit against the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) over its adoption of an unlawful groundwater tax that threatens housing affordability across the state.

“This is government overreach at its worst,” said Speaker Montenegro. **“The people of Arizona elected us to defend their interests, not allow unelected bureaucrats to impose illegal taxes that make the American Dream of homeownership even more out of reach. The 33.3% groundwater tax represents not only a blatant overreach of executive authority, but also a direct attack on hardworking Arizona families who will see the price of new homes increase by thousands. We cannot allow the executive branch to trample on the authority of the Legislature or push through extreme policies that drive up the cost of living.”**

The lawsuit challenges ADWR’s “Alternative Path to Designation of Assured Water Supply” (ADAWS) regulations, which mandate that developers secure 33.3% more water than necessary to meet their own needs.

What's next?

Cities can do a lot with a little water.



Augmentation Concepts in Development

- 1) Colorado River Indian Tribes Leases**
- 2) Roosevelt Dam Storage Modification**
- 3) Bartlett Dam Enlargement**
- 4) Advanced Water Purification**
- 5) Harquahala Groundwater**
- 6) Southern California Re-Use Exchange**
- 7) Ocean Desalination (Exchange or Pipeline)**



Arizona cities will soon import water from idled farmland. That changes things | Opinion

It's a big deal that state water officials have opened the door to groundwater transfers from the Harquahala basin.



Joanna Allhands

Arizona Republic

July 29, 2025, 6:01 a.m. MT

Queen Creek and Buckeye were the first to sign up and have each gotten state approval to transport roughly 5,000 acre-feet of this groundwater annually, which collectively amounts to a million acre-feet over the next century.

That means that more than 85% of the Harquahala project's water remains available for additional purchases – and plenty of water providers besides Queen Creek are expected to vie for it, especially when the water starts flowing.

**What can you
do?**

Enabling holistic thinking about the stewardship of our water

Arizona Water Blueprint

[About the Project](#)

Tools for exploring Arizona's water resources



[The Water Blueprint Map](#)

A comprehensive tool featuring 50+ data layers to explore Arizona's water resources and infrastructure



[Groundwater Level Changes](#)

An interactive map that shows groundwater level changes across Arizona's sub-basins



[Colorado River Shortage](#)

An information hub about the Colorado River shortage



[Water Issues in Depth](#)

Introductions to critical Arizona water issues like the use of water in rural areas and the function of watersheds

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Want to keep learning about water in Arizona? Sign up to receive emails from the Kyl Center for Water Policy at Morrison Institute.

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Enabling holistic thinking
Arizona Water Blueprint

[About the Project](#)

Tools for exploration



The Water Infrastructure

A comprehensive exploration of water infrastructure



Colorado River Shortage

An information hub about the Colorado River shortage



Water Issues in Depth

Introductions to critical Arizona water issues like the use of water in rural areas and the function of watersheds

Groundwater Level Changes

A map showing groundwater level changes across Arizona's sub-basins



bitly

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**Arizona
Water
Blueprint**

[**azwaterblueprint.asu.edu**](http://azwaterblueprint.asu.edu)

