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## For Immediate Release

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# Gila River Indian Community agrees to conserve over 129,000 acre-feet of its water to bolster Lake Mead under the 500 + Plan announced today

SACATON, AZ - Today, on behalf of the Gila River Indian Community, Governor Stephen Roe Lewis signed two agreements with United States Bureau of Reclamation that would conserve over 129,000 acre-feet of its Colorado River water entitlement in 2022 to keep Lake Mead from falling to critically low levels. These agreements supply a substantial portion of Arizona's 2022 contribution to the 500 + Plan that was announced today. This is a significant contribution to this regional effort, representing over twenty-five per cent (25%) of the entire amount estimated to be required to help stabilize the elevation of Lake Mead.

The 500+ Plan, is an agreement among Reclamation, Arizona Department of Water Resources, Central Arizona Project, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Southern Nevada Water Authority. The plan aims to add 500,000 acre-feet of additional water to Lake Mead in both 2022 and 2023 by supporting and funding actions to conserve water across the Lower Colorado River Basin. The additional water would add about 16 feet total to the reservoir's level, which continues to reach record low levels.

"Since September, when I asked the major water policy makers in Arizona to our Reservation for an emergency meeting, the Community has been working with ADWR, CAP, SRP and the United States to help develop a major conservation plan that benefits the Community, Arizona and the entire Colorado River region," said Governor Lewis. "I commend the Lower Basin States and the United States for making so much progress so quickly to help bolster Lake Mead's elevation for next year and beyond. It is a testament to the relationships built during the DCP negotiations that we were all able to come together rapidly and take swift, decisive action. By taking this decisive action, we are hopeful that we can help keep our region from undergoing even further cuts in the next few years."

Tom Buschatzke, Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources said, "I am very pleased that the working relationships we so painstakingly forged during DCP remain so strong and durable. The Community deserves great credit for its leadership role in making today possible and making its water supplies available for the benefit of the entire region."

Leslie Meyers, the Area Director for the Bureau of Reclamation, with whom the Community signed its historic agreements today said, "We appreciate very much the strong working relationship Reclamation has forged with the Community, Governor Lewis and its Council over the past years, especially in these days of intensive drought. These agreements today are a testament to that strong relationship and to our commitment to tackling the drought crisis here in the Southwest head-on."

The Community anticipates further conservation in 2023 to help Arizona meet its goals under the 500 + Plan.

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*Gila River Indian Community located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona and home to the indigenous O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) people. The Tribe is comprised of seven districts, the administrative offices and departments are located in Sacaton, and serve the people throughout these seven community districts. 100% of its profits from gaming and 17 other Enterprises are utilized by the community providing services and opportunities to achieve the highest quality of life.*