

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 27, 2013

The Honorable Doug Von Gausig
Mayor
City of Clarkdale
P.O. Box 308
39 North Ninth Street
Clarkdale, AZ 86324

Dear Mayor Von Gausig:

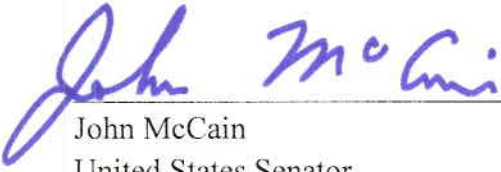
We are writing to you and neighboring elected officials in the Verde River Watershed to urge you to develop a long-term water management strategy that protects the Verde River.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with the Verde River Basin Partnership and the Town of Clarkdale, studied the Verde River and generated a water budget for the Verde Valley that accounts for long-term population growth in the region (*Human Effects on the Hydrologic Systems of the Verde Valley, Central Arizona, 1910-2005 and 2005-2110, Using a Regional Groundwater Flow Model*). The USGS predicted that over the next 100 years the annual baseflow of the Verde River will decrease up to another 8,600 acre-feet and that groundwater wells in parts of the Verde Valley will drop below 100-feet with some running dry. What's more, the USGS concluded that some of the current decreases in flows could be "attributable to groundwater withdrawals upstream and upgradient of the Clarkdale gage." Such a finding raises concerns about the impact of future pumping across the larger region and how it might affect the watershed.

We believe the study serves as a call to action. In order to ensure the region's future prosperity, we view it essential that you and your neighbors protect both groundwater supplies and the Verde's riparian habitat. We also believe the study and the water budget developed by USGS can be an extremely useful tool in helping you develop a water management strategy. We urge you to take advantage of those findings and use them as actionable data. Likewise, we are committed to working with you, where there is a suitable role for the federal government, to develop a long-term water management strategy for the Verde River.

It's clear that the current water uses in the Verde River Watershed are unsustainable, with communities on a path that will distress the Verde River, dry up groundwater wells, and weaken the economic prosperity of the area. We urge you to lead your community into taking a new path that balances current uses with future growth in a manner that protects the River for the enjoyment of future generations. We stand ready to help you in that effort.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senator



Jeff Flake
United States Senator