

[Print this page](#) |[Close this window](#)

SENATORS McCAIN AND FLAKE CALL ON ELECTED OFFICIALS IN VERDE RIVER WATERSHED TO PROTECT WATER SUPPLY

June 28, 2013

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) sent a letter to elected officials in the Verde River Watershed urging them to develop a long-term water management strategy that protects the Verde River. Letters were sent to Yavapai County Board of Supervisors Chairman Chip Davis, Gila County Board of Supervisors Chairman Michael Pastor, Prescott Mayor Marlin Kuykendall, Prescott Valley Mayor Harvey C. Skoog, Sedona Mayor Rob Adams, Camp Verde Mayor Bob Burnside, Cottonwood Mayor Diane Joens, Clarkdale Mayor Don Von Gausig, Jerome Mayor Nicole Check, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Chairman Clinton Pattea, Yavapai-Apache Nation Tribal Chairman David Kwait, and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe Sr. Tribal Chairman Ernest Jones. The U.S. Geological Survey study referenced in the letter can be found [HERE](#).

A sample letter is below.

June 27, 2013

Dear Mayor or Chairman:

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

Jeff Flake

###

 [Print this page](#) |  [Close this window](#)