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**Heller Introduces Bill to Increase Nevada’s Water Supply***Legislation Reauthorizes Federal Conservation Program for Four Years*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today introduced legislation to improve Southern Nevada’s water supply and security by reauthorizing the Colorado River System Conservation Program (CRSCP) for four years.

Established by Congress in 2015 to conserve water and mitigate the impact of droughts in the Colorado River Basin, which includes Southern Nevada, the CRSCP compensates holders of water rights along the basin for using less water. The Colorado River Basin is comprised of two halves: the Upper Basin, which includes Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming and the Lower Basin, which includes Nevada, California, and Arizona.

The CRSCP has conserved nearly 143,000 acre feet of water since its inception in the Lower Basin alone. Without Congressional action, the program is slated to expire in September 2018.

Reauthorizing the program is critical for Southern Nevada as the region receives nearly 90 percent of its water supply from the Colorado River, serving over 2 million residents in Clark County and over 42 million visitors per year. Additionally, the surface of Lake Mead has fallen 131 feet since 2000, and is projected to decline five feet before the end of the year [according to the Las Vegas Review-Journal](https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-las-vegas/historically-bad-start-to-winter-not-reflected-in-lake-mead-projections/).

“Southern Nevada is no stranger to drought, and that’s why I continue to fight for policies that strengthen our state’s water security and infrastructure,” **said Heller.** “I’m proud to introduce this legislation, which reauthorizes the Colorado River System Conservation Program, an initiative that has proven to help conserve water in the Colorado River Basin. Supporting this innovative program is especially important at a time when the surface of Lake Mead continues to fall year after year and as the Basin supplies water to 90 percent of Southern Nevada. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to pass this proposal into law.”

**Background:**

Heller has a long history of authoring and supporting legislation to improve the water supply in Nevada and address emergency drought situations across Western states.

In 2016, the [Senate adopted an amendment](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2016/4/heller-reid-announce-adoption-of-measure-to-address-western-drought-conditions) to the Energy and Water appropriations bill that was filed by Heller and Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) to increase funding for CRSCP by $50 million. The Pilot System Conservation Program was authorized under Sec. 206 of the Energy and Water appropriations bill of 2015.

Additionally, in 2014, [the Senate passed the Emergency Drought Relief Act, legislation introduced by Heller, Reid and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2014/5/heller-feinstein-reid-welcome-senate-passage-of-drought-relief-bill) that requires federal agencies to maximize water supplies, reduce project review times and ensure water is directed to users whose need is greatest.

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