

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:**Megan Taylor |
| June 19, 2018 | 202-224-6244 |

**Heller Files Amendment to Increase Nevada’s Water Supply, Reauthorize Colorado River System Conservation Pilot Program for Four Years**

**WASHINGTON –**U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today filed an amendment to the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that is [based on his legislation to improve Southern Nevada’s water supply and security by reauthorizing the Colorado River System Conservation Pilot Program (CRSCPP) for four years](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/heller-introduces-bill-to-increase-nevada-s-water-supply). On March 22, 2018, the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a [hearing](https://www.energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/full-committee-hearing-to-examine-the-2018-western-water-supply-outlook-and-bills-related-to-water-infrastructure-and-drought-resiliency) on Heller’s legislation.

Established by Congress to conserve water and mitigate the impact of droughts in the Colorado River Basin, which includes Southern Nevada, the CRSCPP 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.

“Because Southern Nevada is no stranger to drought, I’ve been fighting to advance my proposal to strengthen our state’s water security and infrastructure and provide much-needed certainty,” **said Heller.** “My amendment reauthorizes Colorado River System Conservation Pilot Program, an initiative that has proven to help conserve water in the Colorado River Basin. This is particularly 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 will continue to work with my colleagues to pass this proposal into law.”

The CRSCPP 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.

**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.

*###*