

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW REPORT EXAMINES WATER USE IN THE URBAN SOUTHWEST *Albuquerque, Las Vegas Valley and Tucson Can Conserve More*

Boulder, Colorado - A report released today by Western Resource Advocates illustrates that although communities in the Southwest have taken impressive strides to reduce urban water demand, there is still more that can be done. Taking some simple and common-sense actions now will save consumers money, safeguard our rivers and streams, while also ensuring adequate supply for growing communities.

Water in the Urban Southwest: An Updated Analysis of Water Use in Albuquerque, Las Vegas Valley and Tucson provides new information on water use in these fast growing municipalities and shows that business, schools and resorts are integrating conservation into their day-to-day practices, reducing their demand by millions of gallons each year.

“It is terrific that communities are taking measures to conserve water, and this report shows that with a little creativity we can save even more water,” says Taryn Hutchins-Cabibi, a water policy analyst with Western Resource Advocates and the primary author of the report. Ms. Hutchins-Cabibi adds, “The bottom line is that water is a finite resource and needs to be used wisely, especially in the Southwest where rainy days are few, evaporative rates are high, and communities continue to grow.”

The report highlights examples of conservation measures like Tucson Water’s progressive rate structure; Albuquerque’s numerous indoor and outdoor incentives to encourage efficient use; and the Southern Nevada Water Authority’s cutting-edge turf replacement program that pays residents cash for replacing thirsty turf grass with drought-tolerant landscaping.

The report applauds these measures and describes even more water savings to be had. The report suggests that Albuquerque could save as much as 48,000 acre feet of water (an acre foot is equal to 325,851 gallons of water, or enough water to cover a football field to a depth of one foot) through current and expanded conservation measures between now and 2030. An improved water rate structure could also lead to substantial water savings throughout Albuquerque and Bernalillo County.

“Water conservation can and should play a bigger role in reducing our demand on streams and aquifers, helping us sustain human and animal communities across New Mexico,” says Kara Gillon, Staff Attorney with Defenders of Wildlife in Albuquerque.

A full copy of the report can be found on Western Resource Advocates' website at www.westernresourceadvocates.org.

Western Resource Advocates is a non-profit conservation organization working to protect the Interior West's land, air, and water.

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