

# Water 2025:

## *Preventing Crises and Conflict in the West*

◆ **Water is the lifeblood of the American West and the foundation of its economy. It is also the scarcest resource in some of the fastest growing areas of the country**

◆ **Water 2025** is intended to focus attention on the reality that explosive population growth in western urban areas, the emerging need for water for environmental and recreational uses, and the national importance of the domestic production of food and fiber from western farms and ranches is driving major conflicts between these competing uses of water.

◆ **In some areas of the West, existing water supplies are, or will be, inadequate to meet the demands for water for people, cities, farms, and the environment even under normal water supply conditions.**

◆ **Water 2025** recognizes that states, tribes, and local governments should have a leading role in meeting these challenges, and that the Department of the Interior should focus its attention and resources on areas where scarce federal dollars can provide the greatest benefits to the West and the rest of the Nation.

◆ **Water 2025** provides the basis for a public discussion in advance of water crises and sets forth a framework to focus on meeting water supply challenges in the future. This framework includes:

- **Six Principles** to guide Interior in addressing water problems.
- **Five Realities** that drive water crises.
- **Four Key Tools** to help proactively manage scarce water resources.

### ◆ **Six Principles**

- Recognize and respect state, tribal, and federal water rights, contracts, and interstate compacts or decrees of the United States Supreme Court that allocate the right to use water.
- Maintain and modernize existing water facilities so they will continue to provide water and power.
- Enhance water conservation, use efficiency, and resource monitoring to allow existing water supplies to be used more effectively.
- Use collaborative approaches and market based transfers to minimize conflicts.
- Improve water treatment technology, such as desalination, to help increase water supply.
- Existing water supply infrastructure can provide additional benefits for existing and emerging needs for water.

### ◆ **Five Realities**

- Explosive population growth in areas of the West where water is already scarce.
- Water shortages occur frequently in the West.
- Over-allocated watersheds can cause crisis and conflict.
- Water facilities are aging.
- Crisis management is not effective in dealing with water conflicts.

### ◆ **Four Key Tools**

- Conservation, Efficiency, and Markets
- Collaboration
- Improved Technology
- Remove Institutional Barriers and Increase Interagency Cooperation

### ◆ **Water 2025 will:**

- Facilitate a more forward-looking focus on water-starved areas of the country;
- Help to stretch or increase water supplies to satisfy the demands of growing populations, protect environmental needs, and strengthen regional, tribal and local economies;
- Provide added environmental benefits to many watersheds, rivers, and streams;
- Minimize water crises in critical watersheds by improving the environment and addressing the effects of drought on important economies; and,
- Provide a balanced, practical approach to water management for the next century.

