

For immediate release: September 22, 2023

Contact: Jeff Fontaine, ccjfontaine@gmail.com and 775-443-7667

Regional water authorities seek funding for voluntary water rights retirements in central Nevada

CARSON CITY, Nev. — The Central Nevada Regional Water Authority (CNRWA) and Humboldt River Basin Water Authority (HRBWA) recently approved funding to purchase and retire groundwater rights from willing sellers.

\$25 million is available from the Nevada Water Conservation and Infrastructure Initiative. The funds are to purchase and permanently retire groundwater rights from willing sellers in groundwater basins with insufficient water supply to serve all water rights and domestic wells.

Funding is available for over-appropriated and over-pumped groundwater basins in the Central Hydrographic Region and Humboldt River Basin. The program addresses and avoids conflicts with existing rights or detriments to the public interest and natural resources. Retiring groundwater rights will help stabilize groundwater levels.

Funding priorities are for retiring irrigation rights in over-pumped basins subject to curtailment. Purchasing groundwater rights in other over-appropriated basins will also be considered if such purchases mitigate conflicts with existing rights or if there are detriments to natural resources.

If funding is approved in October, CNRWA and HRBWA anticipate initiating the application process in early December. A list of prospective sellers must be submitted to the state by February 1, 2024.

The [Central Nevada Regional Water Authority](#) was established in 2005 and assists member counties (Churchill, Elko, Esmeralda, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Nye, Pershing, and White Pine) in addressing water resource issues so these counties will not only have an economic future but also their valued quality of life and natural environment will be maintained.

The Central Hydrographic Region is the largest of Nevada's hydrographic regions and includes 23 over-appropriated groundwater basins. Nine of the over-appropriated basins located in CNRWA member counties are also over-pumped. More than 90% of the groundwater pumped in the Central Hydrographic Region is for irrigation.

The [Humboldt River Basin Water Authority](#) was established in 1995 to ensure the quality and availability of water supplies within the Humboldt River Basin for the mutual benefit of the residents and industries within and visitors to Humboldt, Lander, Eureka, Elko and Pershing Counties.

Some groundwater pumping in the Humboldt River Basin has created water shortages for some senior decreed surface water rights, and 19 of the 34 groundwater basins are over-appropriated, including nine that are over-pumped. About 70% of the groundwater pumped in the over-pumped basins in the Humboldt Basin is for irrigation.

The Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources manages the program which is supported by funding from the American Rescue Plan Act.

For more information, contact Jeff Fontaine at ccjfontaine@gmail.com and 775-443-7667.