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Water Efficiency & Sustainability in the Mountain West, 2022

Zachary Billot

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, zachary.billot@unlv.edu

Caitlin J. Saladino

Brookings Mountain West & The Lincy Institute, caitlin.saladino@unlv.edu

William E. Brown Jr.

Brookings Mountain West, william.brown@unlv.edu

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WATER EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2022

Environment Fact Sheet No. 18 | October 2023

Prepared by: Zachary Billot, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet analyzes the effectiveness of state-level policies related to water usage, conservation, and sustainability for the Mountain West states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah in 2022. The original data are published in the “2022 State Policy Scorecard for Water Efficiency and Sustainability” report written by the Alliance for Water Efficiency.¹

ABOUT THE DATA:

The original report assigns points in 13 categories to create the “Water Efficiency & Sustainability Score” which assesses water conservation, general sustainability, and transparency of reporting in each U.S. state. The overall “Water Efficiency & Sustainability Score” measures up to a maximum of 89 points.

Water Efficiency & Sustainability Score Categories	Maximum Possible Points
Plumbing Fixture Standards and Codes	12.0
Water Loss Control	11.0
Water Conservation Planning	27.5
Drought Preparedness Planning	8.5
Climate Action Planning	4.0
Water-Land Use Planning Integration	6.0
State Funding for Water Efficiency Programs	4.0
State-provided Technical Assistance for Water Efficiency	3.0
Rate Structures that Encourage Conservation	4.0
State Funding for Water Bill Assistance	2.0
State Funding and Support for Water Reuse	4.0
Accounting for Energy Savings from Water Efficiency	1.0
Completion of Survey	2.0

Each category is designated a point value between 1.0 and 27.5 possible points. States are then ranked nationally and regionally based on their cumulative score. These data do not consider legislative action completed at the local level for the report but instead focus on law and policy at the state level.

KEY FINDINGS:

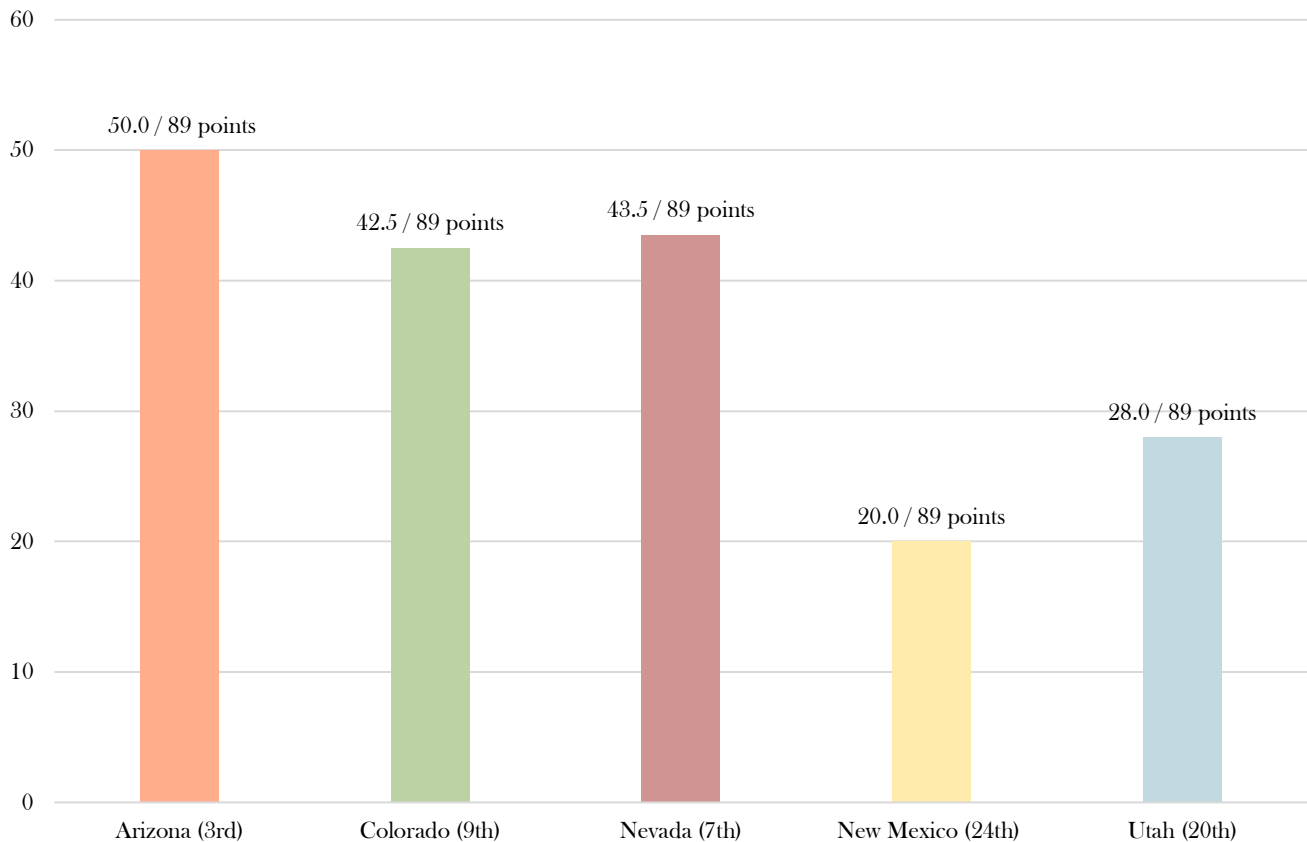
1. Among Mountain West states, Arizona received the highest cumulative “Water Efficiency & Sustainability Score” with 50 out of 89 points.
2. All Mountain West states ranked among the top 25 states nationally for water efficiency & sustainability, and three Mountain West states – Arizona (3rd), Nevada (7th), and Colorado (9th) – ranked among the top 10.
3. Among Mountain West states, New Mexico received 0 points in the greatest number of categories (7 out of 13) of the “Water Efficiency and Sustainability Score.”

¹ “2022 State Policy Scorecard for Water Efficiency and Sustainability.” *Alliance for Water Efficiency*. www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/2022Scorecard#

4. All Mountain West states received 0 points in the “state funding for water bill assistance” and “accounting for energy savings from water efficiency” categories of the “Water Efficiency and Sustainability Score.”
5. All Mountain West states received the maximum number of points (4) in the “state funding for water efficiency programs” category of the “Water Efficiency and Sustainability Score.”

In Figure 1, the cumulative “Water Efficiency & Sustainability Score” is shown for each Mountain West state. States can receive a maximum of 89 points. Among Mountain West states, Arizona scored highest with 50 points, ranking 3rd nationally. Three Mountain West states – Arizona (3rd), Nevada (7th), and Colorado (9th) – rank among the top 10 states nationally for the “Water Efficiency and Sustainability Score.” New Mexico (20 points) received the lowest “Water Efficiency and Sustainability Score” in the Mountain West, followed closely by Utah (28 points). These were the only Mountain West states to score under 30 points.

Figure 1: Cumulative Water Efficiency & Sustainability Scores in the Mountain West, 2022



* Adapted from “2022 State Policy Scorecard for Water Efficiency and Sustainability”. *Alliance for Water Efficiency*. www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/2022Scorecard#

Table 1 shows scores for each Mountain West state in the 13 categories that comprise the “Water & Sustainability Score.” New Mexico received 0 points in the most categories, a total of 7, and received the fewest total points (20.0) among Mountain West states. All Mountain West states received 0 points in the categories assessing “state funding for water bill assistance” and “accounting for energy savings from water efficiency.” Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah each received 0 points for “climate action planning,” with Arizona and Colorado receiving 1 point out of an available 4 points for this category. Except for “completion of survey”, the category assessing “state funding for water efficiency programs” was the only category in which all Mountain West states received the maximum point value (4 points).

Table 1: Water Efficiency and Sustainability Categorical Scores for the Mountain West States, 2022

Water Efficiency and Sustainability Categories	AZ	NV	CO	UT	NM
Plumbing Fixture Standards and Codes (max. 12 points)	0.0	4.0	9.0	0.0	0.0
Water Loss Control (max. 11 points)	9.5	6.0	5.0	0.0	1.0
Water Conservation Planning (max. 27.5 points)	18.0	12.5	11.5	9.0	7.0
Drought Preparedness Planning (max. 8.5 points)	6.5	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Climate Action Planning (max. 4 points)	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Water-Land Use Planning Integration (max. 6 points)	2.0	1.0	4.0	4.0	0.0
State Funding for Water Efficiency Programs (max. 4 points)	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
State-provided Technical Assistance for Water Efficiency (max. 3 points)	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
Rate Structures that Encourage Conservation (max. 4 points)	0.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	0.0
State Funding for Water Bill Assistance (max. 2 points)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
State Funding and Support for Water Reuse (max. 4 points)	4.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	4.0
Accounting for Energy Savings from Water Efficiency (max. 1 point)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Completion of Survey (max. 2 points)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Total	50.0	43.5	42.5	28.0	20.0

* Adapted from “2022 State Policy Scorecard for Water Efficiency and Sustainability.” *Alliance for Water Efficiency*.
www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/2022Scorecard#