



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

Colorado River Resources

• Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for December 19, 2025 – January 11, 2026.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Post-2026 Operational Guidelines Draft Environmental Impact Statement Issued

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) issued the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the post-2026 operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead, marking a significant milestone in the development of new Colorado River operational guidelines. Issuance of the DEIS represents a key step in the National Environmental Policy Act process to replace the 2007 Interim Guidelines, which expire at the end of 2026. The DEIS sets out Reclamation's preliminary analysis of five alternatives for releases from Lake Powell and shortage and surplus determinations at Lake Mead, and evaluates potential effects on water supplies, reservoir elevations, hydropower production, environmental resources, and other system interests. Publication of the DEIS launches the formal public review and comment period, providing Metropolitan and other stakeholders an opportunity to evaluate the proposed alternatives and submit input as Reclamation moves toward preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement and a Record of Decision.

The range of alternatives evaluated in the DEIS was designed to be sufficiently comprehensive to allow Reclamation to consider and adopt a Colorado River Basin States (Basin States) consensus approach within the bounds of the completed environmental analysis. The Basin States continue to meet with the goal of reaching consensus on the operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead for the post-2026 period by Reclamation's deadline of February 14, 2026. Metropolitan staff plan to submit comments on the DEIS by the deadline of March 2, 2026.

Develop Post-2026 Guidelines and Negotiate Implementation Agreements: Provide Input that Shapes Reclamation's Selected Alternative

Basin States Meetings

The Basin States are meeting regularly to develop agreement on the key operational elements of the Post-2026 Guidelines including criteria for releases from Lake Powell, Lower Basin reduction triggers, storage in Lake Mead, and whether and under what conditions the Upper Basin will reduce water uses. Metropolitan staff participates in these meetings as advisors to California's principal representative in the Basin States negotiations, JB Hamby, in his role as Chair of the Colorado River Board of California. Several work groups have been formed to answer questions raised by the principals, including questions about needed flexibility in accessing Intentionally Created Surplus supplies from Lake Mead. Metropolitan staff participates in each of the work groups. The Basin States have regular discussions to meet a February 14 deadline established by the Interior Department to reach agreement on the criteria noted above. Staff will provide an update during Metropolitan's February One Water and Adaptation Committee Meeting.

Date of Report: 2/9/2026