



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 the management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for July 28 – August 18, 2025.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Develop Post-2026 Guidelines and Negotiate Implementation Agreements: Provide input that shapes U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) selected alternative

Colorado River Basin States (Basin States) Meetings

The Basin States are meeting frequently in an effort to reach consensus on an alternative for Post-2026 operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Recent discussions have focused on how Lake Powell releases will be determined in the Post-2026 Guidelines. Lake Powell releases supply both the Lower Basin and Mexico Treaty deliveries. The Interior Department and Reclamation support the Basin States' effort to reach a consensus alternative that may be incorporated into the Post-2026 Guidelines. 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.

Develop Post-2026 Guidelines and Negotiate Implementation Agreements: Negotiate implementation agreements that protect and benefit Metropolitan's interests

Lower Basin Meetings

California, Arizona, and Nevada are working together to reach a Lower Basin consensus regarding operational elements of Lake Mead for the Post-2026 Guidelines including Lower Basin water use reductions; storage of conserved water (like Intentionally Created Surplus [ICS]), including augmentation water that may be exchanged with interstate partners; and how any surpluses would be allocated. Metropolitan staff participates in these meetings along with representatives of other Lower Basin contractors and States.

California 440 Meetings

California, Arizona, and Nevada have tentatively agreed to reduce Lower Basin water use by 1.5 million acre-feet (maf) under most system conditions to address evaporation and other system losses - often referred to as the structural deficit. The 1.5 maf of reductions includes 250,000 acre-feet (af) that is contingent on Mexico's participation at past levels. California's share of the 1.5 maf would be 440,000 af (440). The California contractors have started meeting to develop commitments to meet California's 440. Metropolitan is working with the other contractors to develop principles for sharing California's Colorado River reductions in the Post-2026 Guidelines. The agencies have agreed to develop a proposal for sharing reduction by this November. Staff will provide updates and receive board direction on the process as it moves forward.

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Colorado River Basin August 24-Month Study

Reclamation issued the August 24-Month Study for the Colorado River Basin for Water Year 2026. The August 24-Month Study projections of January 1 reservoir elevations sets the operating tiers for Lake Powell and Lake Mead and is used to project annual release volumes from Lake Powell to Lake Mead. In the most probable scenario, Lake Powell is projected to be in the Mid-Elevation Release Tier triggering an annual release of 7.48 maf, which is less than the normal annual release of 8.23 maf. If dry conditions return to the Colorado River Basin, release volumes may be adjusted downward based on the April 24-Month Study. Lake Mead will operate in a Tier 1 Shortage Condition with Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan contributions and Minute 323 water savings contributions. Metropolitan's water supplies are not impacted during a Tier 1 shortage. ICS and system conservation water are also projected to be created, and Metropolitan may take delivery of ICS in 2026, if needed, to meet demands in our service area.