



## Colorado River Management Group

- **Colorado River Management Report**

### Summary

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This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for October 2024.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### Development of Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) hosted a public webinar to provide information on the preliminary modeling results of the proposed alternatives and status of the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines development. Past post-2026 development timelines showed that a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) would be released in December 2024. Instead, in this webinar, Reclamation stated that a 'range of alternatives' would be identified in December 2024. The webinar stressed that Reclamation's goal is to develop a reasonable and broad range of alternatives through collaboration with key partners and that while Reclamation has not made a final determination of the alternatives that will be carried forward for consideration in the draft EIS, Reclamation anticipates identifying the range of alternatives in December 2024. The webinar showed some early modeling results on performance of the Lower Division States alternative, Upper Division States Alternative, Gila River Indian Community's Alternative, and an alternative submitted by conservation organizations. The results of the Lower Division States alternative found Lake Powell falling below 3,500 feet in over 50 percent of years even while imposing Upper Basin policy reductions (a median reduction around 350,000), while Lake Mead stays above 1,000' in almost 90 percent of years, even under the driest conditions. However, this result is due in part to the assumption that Upper Basin demands increase by over one million acre-feet would reduce the volume of water flowing into Lake Powell. The Upper Division States alternative and conservation organizations' alternative showed fewer occurrences of Lake Powell declining below elevation 3,500 feet due to larger and more frequent water use reductions in the Lower Basin. Reclamation anticipates that the draft EIS will be released in the spring of 2025.

#### Salinity Control Forum Meeting

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) conducted its semi-annual meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona on October 22-23. The Forum, which is comprised of representatives from the seven Colorado River Basin states, works with Reclamation to provide recommendations and assistance in implementing the Colorado River Salinity Control Program (Program). During the meeting Reclamation provided a report highlighting a reversing trend of seismic activity in the Paradox Valley, which is good news for the continued operation of the well that captures brine and disposes it two miles below the surface. Earlier this year, seismic trends were worrisome, leading Reclamation to consider limiting well operations, but more recent data indicates continued operation of the well is safe for at least the next few years. The Forum also received a report on the proposed legislation to help stabilize the finances of the Program; the legislation has currently stalled but additional options for its passage are being pursued. Finally, Reclamation provided an update on revised salinity modeling in the

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Colorado River, which had been predicting increased salinity at Metropolitan's intake in the next few years, but now show that salinity levels are forecast to be mostly stable even with the drier hydrology of the last two decades.