



● Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month of July 2023.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

2007 Interim Guidelines Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Update

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) temporarily withdrew the draft SEIS to fully analyze the alternative proposed in a May 22, 2023, letter from California, Arizona, and Nevada that would conserve at least 3.0 million acre-feet of water on top of existing shortage and Drought Contingency Plan reductions through 2026. This proposal is called the "Lower Basin Plan". The Lower Division States requested that Reclamation fully analyze the Lower Basin Plan as an action alternative in the SEIS. The seven Colorado River Basin States (Basin States) also sent a letter requesting that Reclamation pause the SEIS and fully analyze the Lower Basin Plan as an action alternative. After Reclamation has completed its analysis, it will publish a revised draft SEIS in September/October 2023. Following the public comment period on the revised draft SEIS, Reclamation anticipates finalizing the SEIS early next year. Metropolitan staff is working with other California contractors to develop the forbearance agreements necessary for implementation. Part of the Lower Basin Plan is execution of contracts with Reclamation using Inflation Reduction Act funds to implement water conservation activities in the Lower Basin. To date, only one contract has been approved (a contract with Coachella Valley Water District). There are four additional contracts in California waiting for approval. Reclamation hopes to approve all the contracts prior to issuing the revised draft SEIS.

Post-2026 Operational Guidelines Environmental Impact Statement Scoping

Reclamation is currently receiving public comments on the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Post-2026 operational guidelines and strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Reclamation is seeking comments on the purpose and need of the EIS, and scope of the analysis. The Basin States are working to develop a joint scoping comment letter. Metropolitan staff is working with the Basin States and other agencies to develop a Basin States scoping comment letter. Comments are due August 15, 2023.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Drought Mitigation Funding Bucket 2 Update

Reclamation sent a letter to Lower Basin Colorado River contract and entitlement holders requesting proposals for long-term durable system efficiency improvement projects that result in water conservation benefitting the lower Colorado River System and its water users. This is the next phase of the Lower Colorado River Conservation Program (using "Bucket 2" IRA funds) intended to provide new opportunities to fund system conservation and efficiencies in the Lower Basin that lead to durable long-term solutions for the Colorado River System that results in additional volumes of water remaining in Lake Mead. The deadline to submit proposals has been extended from July 19 to August 18, 2023. Metropolitan staff continue to refine its proposal that reflects input received from Metropolitan's member agencies and Board of Directors.