



One Water and Adaptation Committee

# Update on Basin States Discussions Regarding Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

Item 6a

July 7, 2025

# Item 7a

## Update on Basin States Discussions Regarding Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

### Subject

Development of Post-2026 Operational Guidelines for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

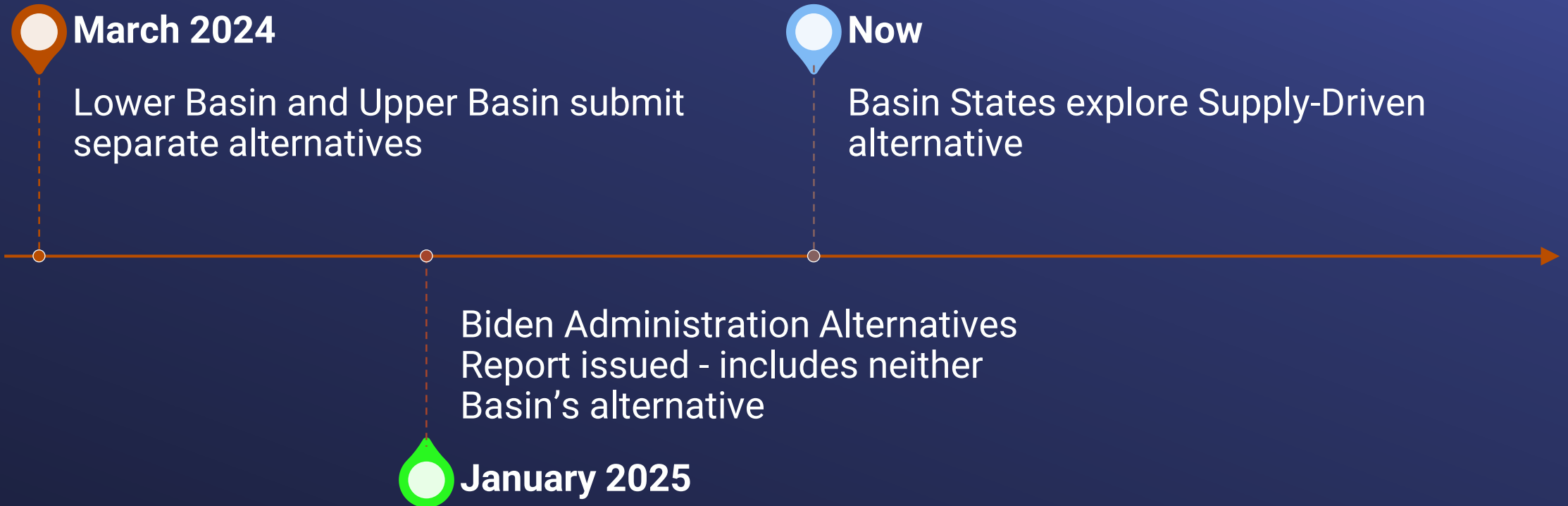
### Purpose

Update on Basin States discussion regarding development of Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

### Next Steps

Continue efforts to seek a consensus among Basin States that protects Metropolitan's Colorado River interests

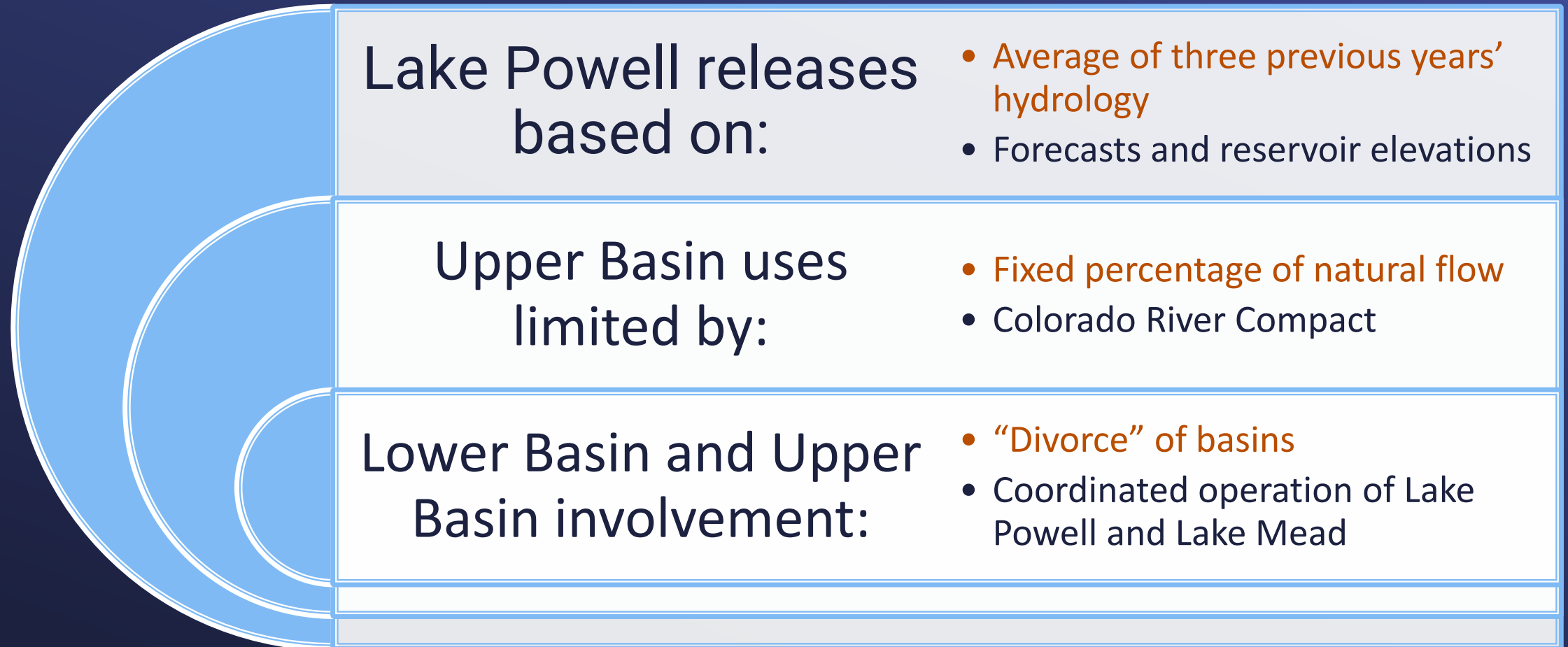
# Status of Basin States Discussions



# U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Post-2026 NEPA Timeline



# Supply-Driven Alternative v. Current Ops



# Without a Basins States Consensus

The Secretary of Interior  
would use unilateral authority  
to operate Lake Powell and  
Lake Mead if the Basin States  
don't reach consensus

## Potential Risks and Uncertainties

- Operations could default to something like the 1970 Long Range Operating Criteria – 8.23 maf fixed annual Powell releases
- Lake Powell more likely to fall below the infrastructure protection elevation, leading to risk of reduced releases to Lower Basin
- Releases from Lake Powell likely to fall below volume required by Colorado River Compact, increasing interstate litigation risk
- Reaching new shortage sharing agreement with Mexico becomes more difficult

# Forecasted Powell Release vs. Compact Requirements

The Central Arizona Project shared a similar graphic at a recent Arizona Reconsultation Committee. Sometime during WY 2027, releases from Lake Powell are forecast to fall short of the 82.5 maf/10-year average.

## Projected Water Year Flows Below Compact Requirements 10-yr Aggregate: Lees Ferry Gage + Paria River Gage

