



One Water & Stewardship Committee

# Basin States Discussions Regarding Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

Item 6b

October 7, 2024

**Item 6b**  
Update on  
Basin States  
Discussions  
Regarding Post-  
2026  
Operational  
Guidelines

**Subject**

Basin States discussions regarding development of Post-2026 Operational Guidelines for management of Colorado River system reservoirs

**Purpose**

Provide update on recent discussions in the development of the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

**Next Steps**

Continue discussions with Federal, Basin State and California partners in development of Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and implementing agreements

# Colorado River Reservoir Management

Reclamation's adoption of new operational guidelines constitutes a major federal action that requires an environmental analysis, in this case an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

## Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

- The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is developing the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines for management of Colorado River system reservoirs
- The guidelines determine:
  - releases from Lake Powell
  - water uses/shortages in the Lower Basin
  - storage of conserved water (like Intentionally Created Surplus)

# Recent EIS Development Process



# Alternatives Reclamation Is Analyzing



**Lower Basin States Alternative**



**Upper Division States Alternative**



**Gila River Indian Community Alternative**

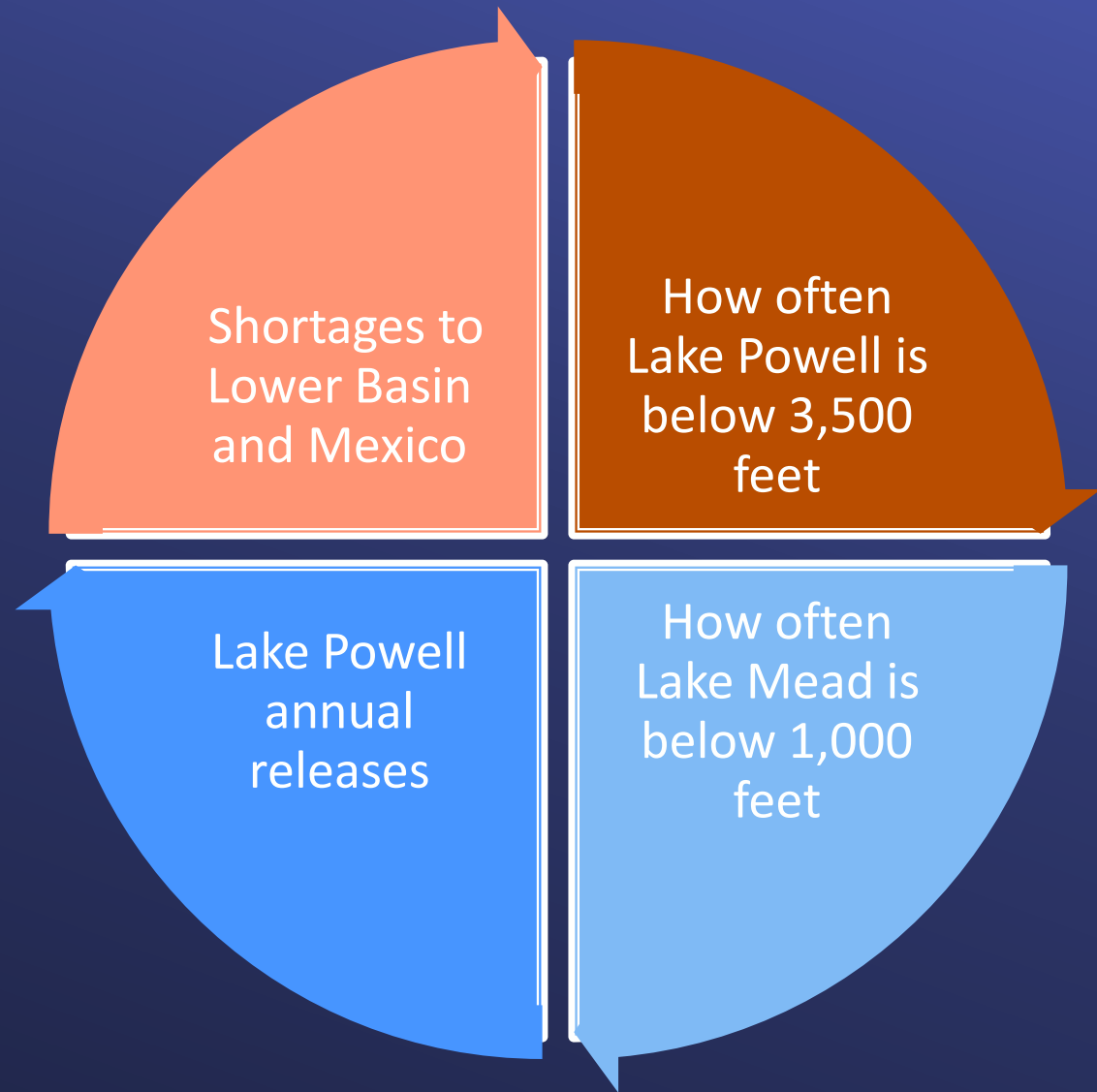
*Other alternatives: No Action, Continued Current Strategies, other federal alternatives*



**NGO Alternative**

# Reclamation's EIS Modeling of Alternatives

Reclamation is anticipated to evaluate how the alternatives perform in these categories, based on a set of five hydrologies that represent conditions wetter, drier, and similar to the past thirty years





# Comparison of Lower and Upper Basin Alternatives

## Lower Basin States Alternative

Addresses structural deficit

Operates the reservoirs based on system contents rather than elevations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Shares water use reductions broadly

Includes provisions for storage of conserved water

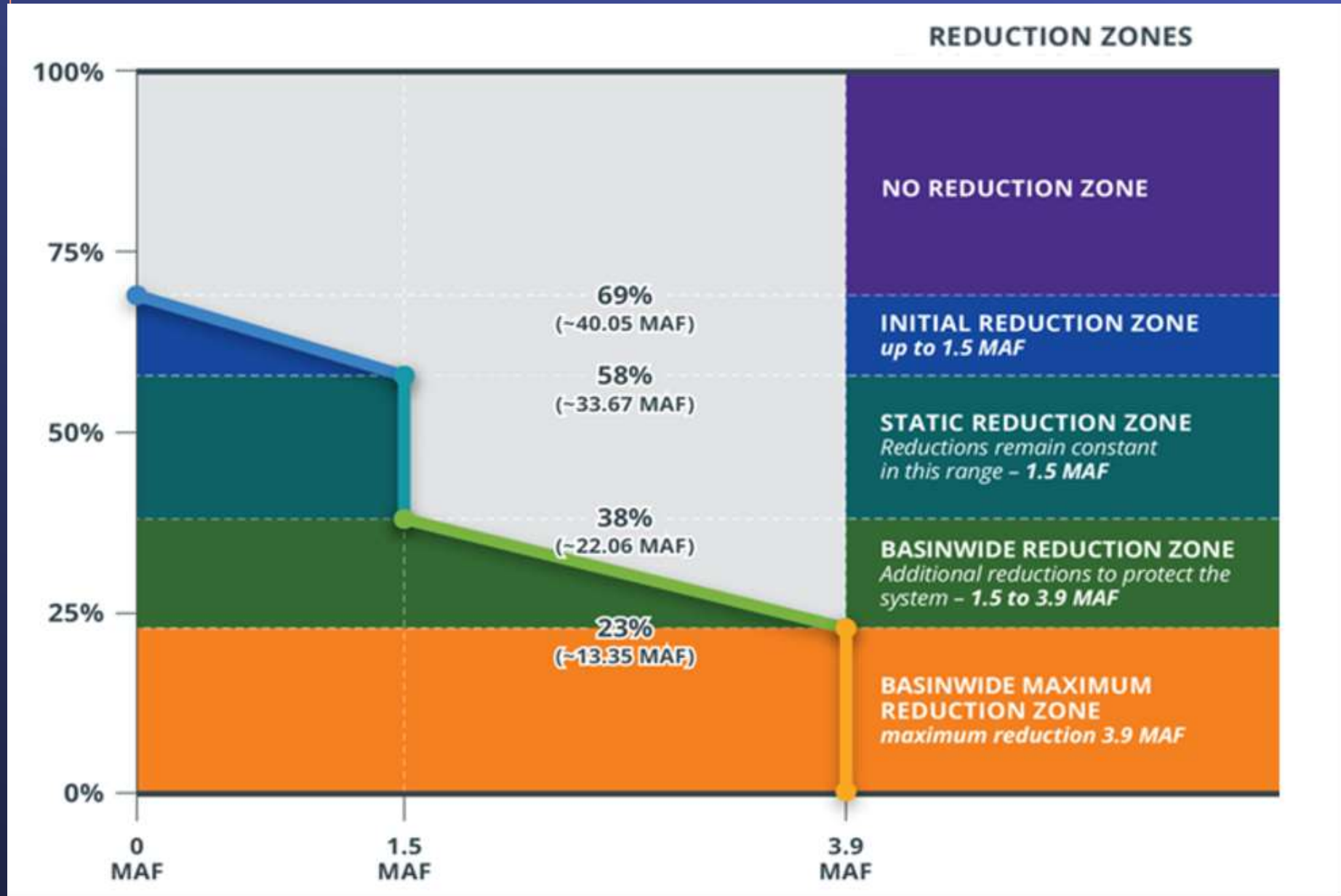
## Upper Division States Alternative

Keeps Lake Powell relatively high by reducing releases to the Lower Basin and imposing shortages in the Lower Basin at higher reservoir elevations

Agrees to consider “parallel activities” related to conservation in the Upper Basin

Lower Basin Alternative

# Lower Basin Reductions & Basinwide Reductions at Lowest Conditions





## Share of 1.5 maf Static Reductions in Lower Basin Alternative

\* The Lower Basin Alternative assumes that Mexico's reductions will be in parity with shortages in Treaty Minute 323, but Mexico's final share of reductions will be determined in a new Treaty Minute.

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Arizona – 760,000 AF

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California – 440,000 AF

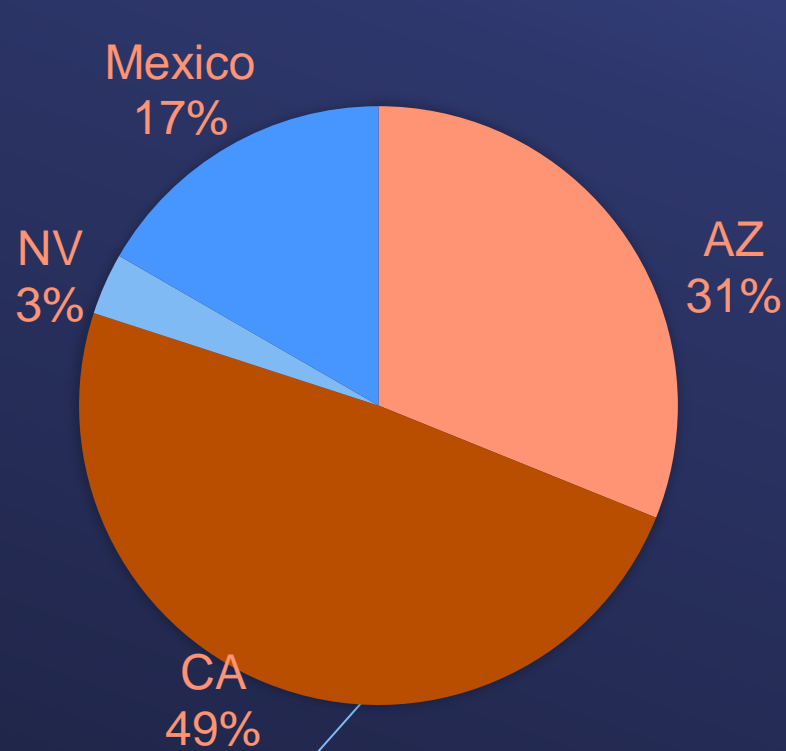
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Nevada – 50,000 AF

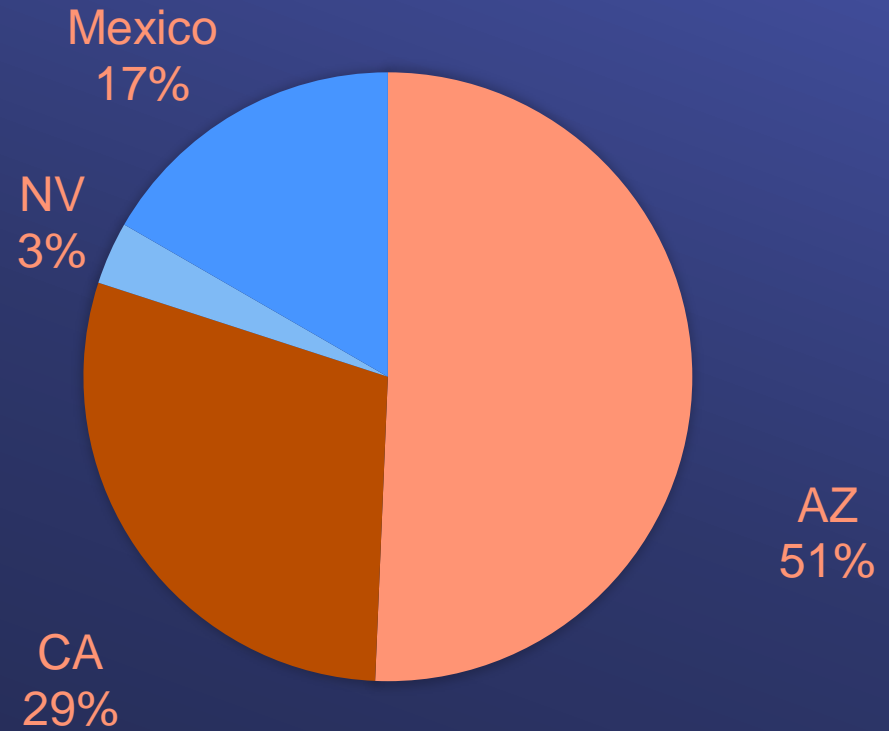
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\* *Mexico – 250,000 AF*

# Share of Lower Basin and Mexico Allocations v. Static Reduction Cuts in Lower Basin Alternative



Lower Basin States and Mexico Normal Year Allocations



Lower Basin States and Mexico Share of Static Reduction Cuts

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines Next Steps



