



One Water and Adaptation Committee

Update on Basin States Discussion Regarding Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

February 9, 2026

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

Subject

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

Purpose

Update on the Bureau of Reclamation's Post-2026 Operational Guidelines environmental impact statement (EIS) and related Basin States discussions

Next Steps

Give regular updates to Board and receive Board direction on Post-2026 Basin States discussions

Colorado River Reservoir Management

- Bureau of Reclamation owns and operates Glen Canyon and Hoover dams
- Reclamation operates the dams and manages Lake Powell and Lake Mead according to the Law of the River
- Post-2026 Final EIS and Record of Decision for operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead must be completed by October 1, 2026 – less than 8 months away
- Seeking Basin States consensus on future operations affecting 40+ million people in the basin



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Bureau of Reclamation's Timeline

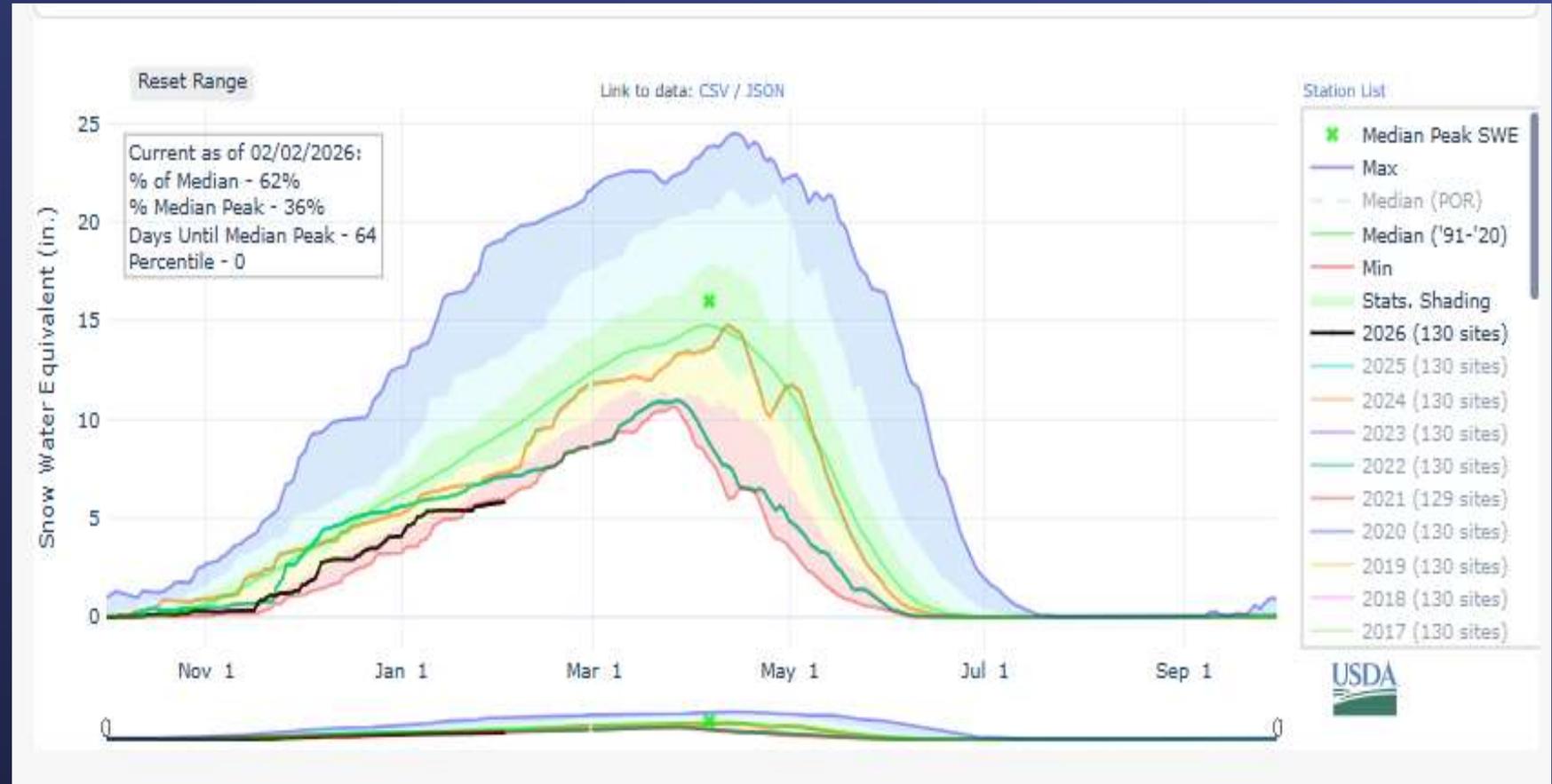


Upper Colorado River Snowpack at Record Lows



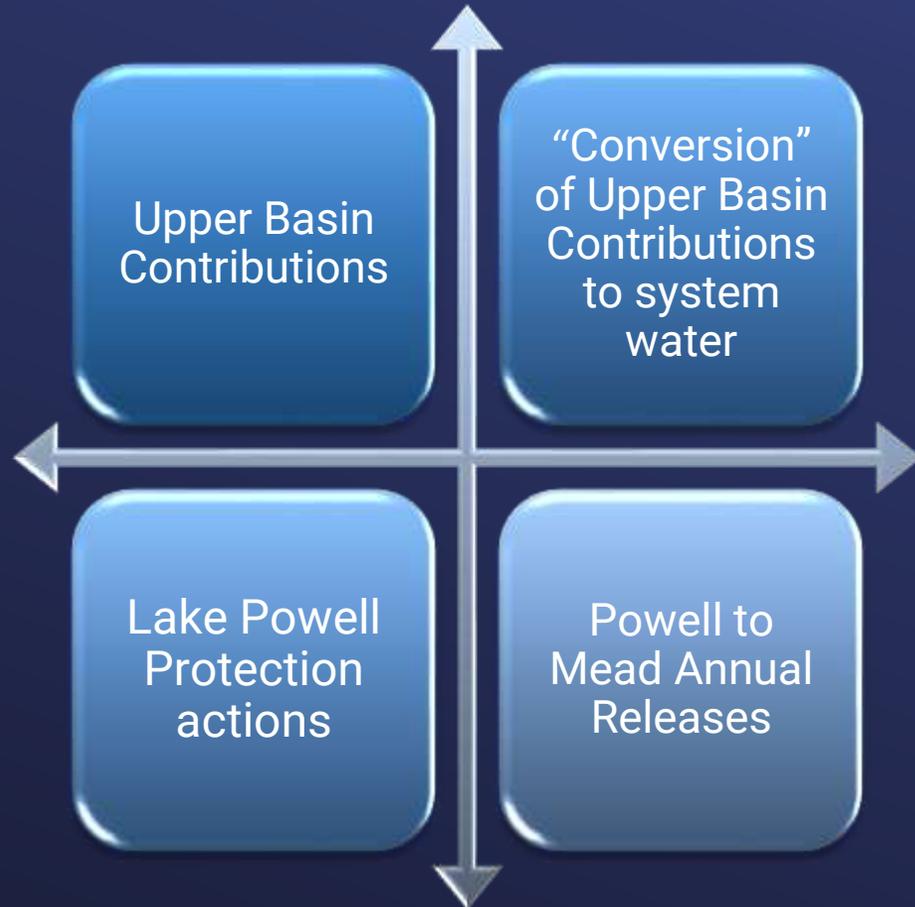
Upper Colorado River snowpack is currently tracking below 2002 levels — the driest runoff year on record.

The January 24-Month Study projects runoff at 68% of the 30-year average, with further declines possible if dry conditions continue.

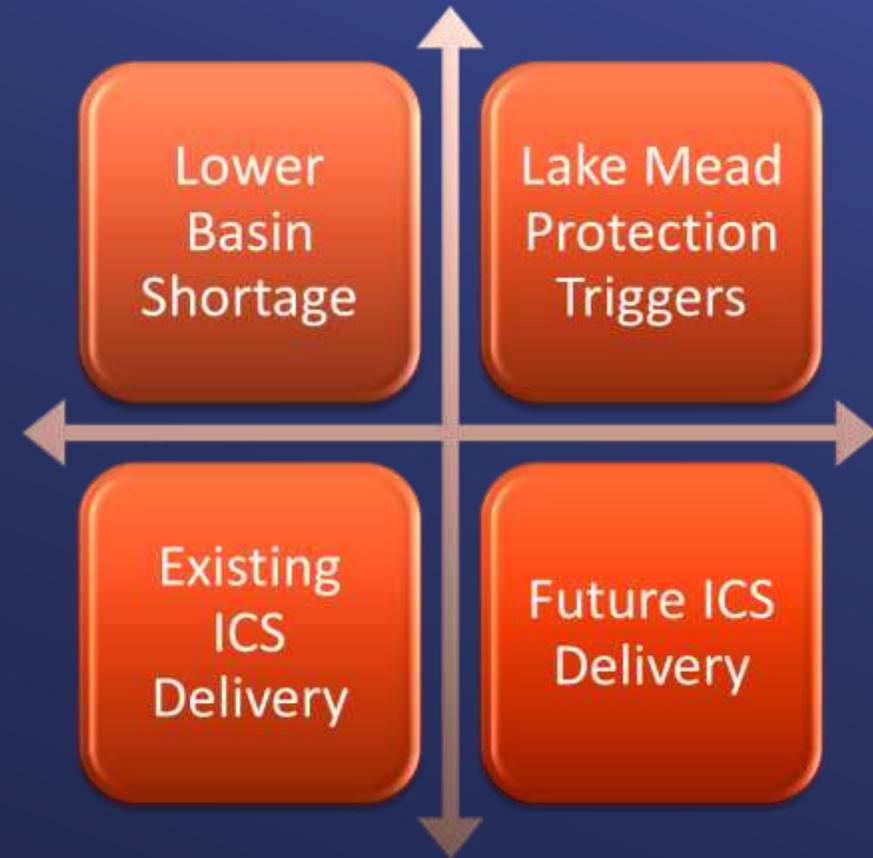


Post-2026 Operations To Be Determined

Upper Basin Operational Elements

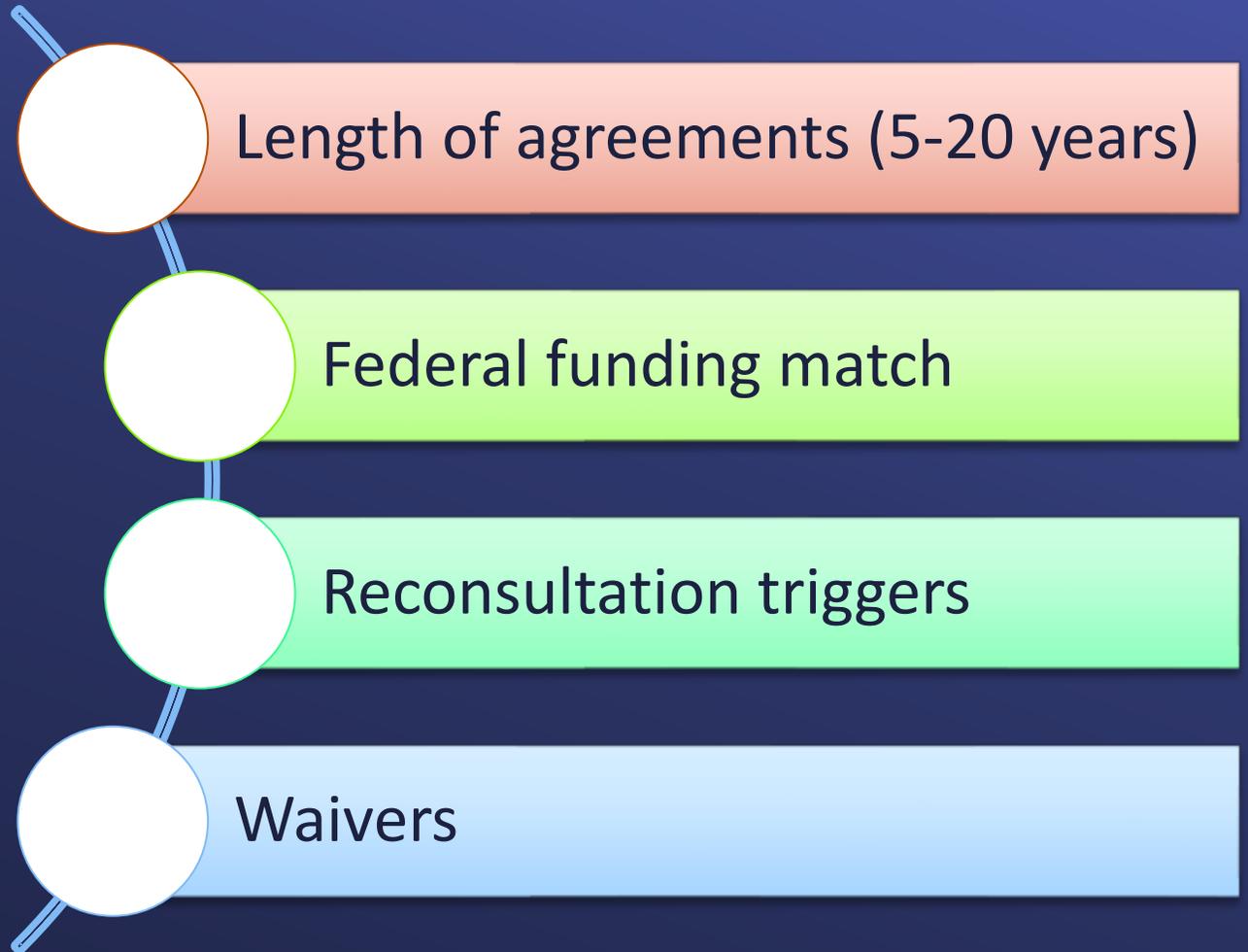


Lower Basin Operational Elements



Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

Other Elements To Be
Determined



Interior Secretary Meeting with Basin State Governors

All parties expressed commitment to reach a negotiated consensus agreement on post-2026 operations.

Underlying tensions remain –

Arizona position: Continues to insist on shared reductions between Upper and Lower Basins when Lower Basin reductions exceed 1.5 maf/yr

Colorado position: Maintains that any Upper Basin conservation must be voluntary and opposes any mandatory Upper Basin reductions



 The Washington Post

Fate of Colorado River hangs in balance as political battle brews

 The New York Times

Governors Dive Into an Impasse Over Colorado River Water Use

 Politico

The West's water war arrives in Washington

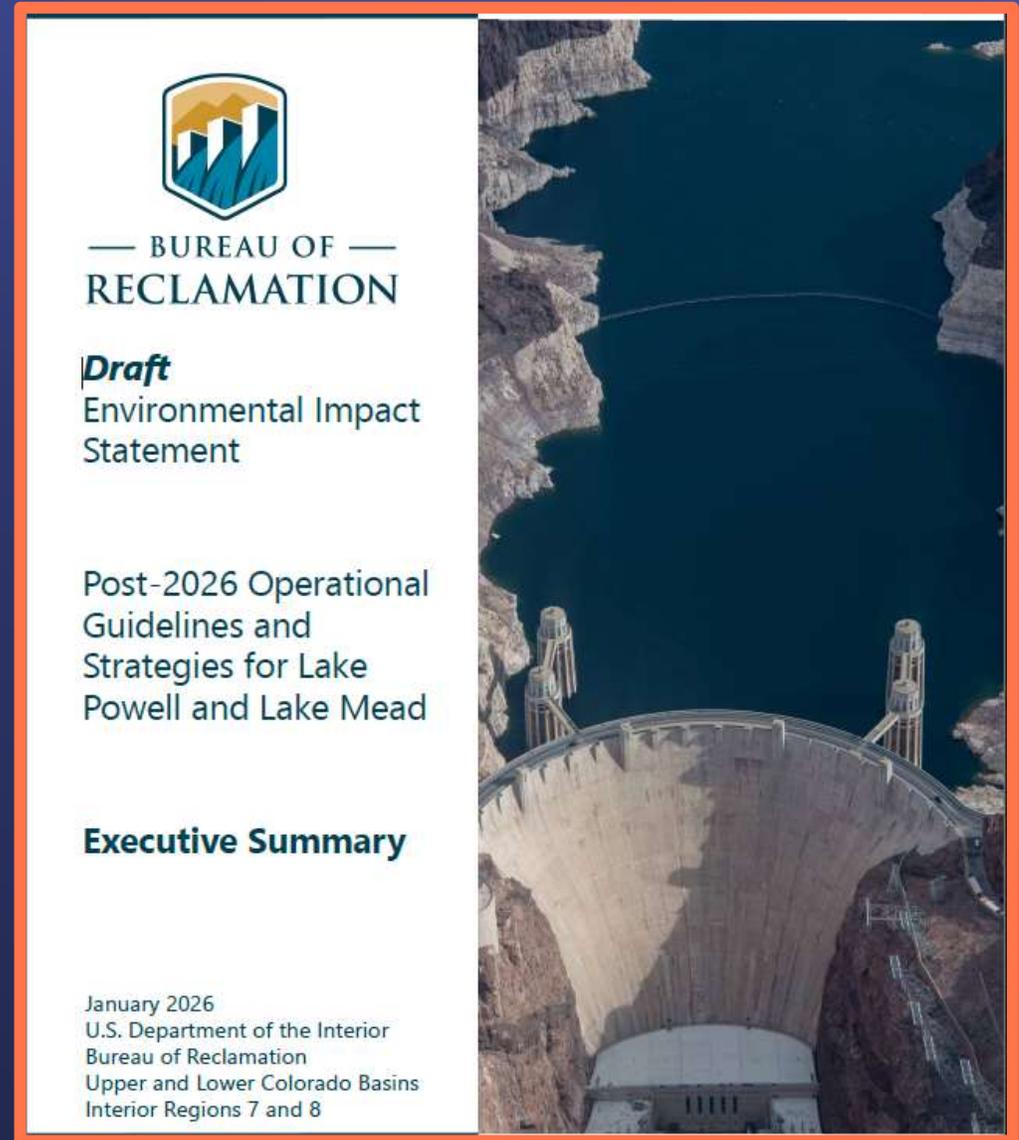
 Colorado Public Radio

Colorado 'is not going to be a sucker' around Colorado River issues, says Attorney General Weiser, as Gov. Polis attends negotiation in DC

Headlines in Days After Secretary's Meeting with Governors

Alternatives Analyzed in DEIS

- No Action Alternative
- Basic Coordination Alternative
- Enhanced Coordination Alternative
- Maximum Operational Flexibility Alternative
- Supply Driven Alternative
- *Lower Basin Alternative was not analyzed*



The image shows the cover of a report from the Bureau of Reclamation. The top left features the Bureau of Reclamation logo, which is a shield containing a stylized mountain range. Below the logo, the text reads "BUREAU OF RECLAMATION". Underneath that, it says "Draft Environmental Impact Statement". The main title of the report is "Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead". Below the title is the section "Executive Summary". At the bottom left, the date "January 2026" is listed, followed by "U.S. Department of the Interior", "Bureau of Reclamation", "Upper and Lower Colorado Basins", and "Interior Regions 7 and 8". The right side of the cover features a photograph of a large concrete dam, likely Lake Powell Dam, with water visible behind it and a bridge structure in the distance.


— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Draft
Environmental Impact
Statement

Post-2026 Operational
Guidelines and
Strategies for Lake
Powell and Lake Mead

Executive Summary

January 2026
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Upper and Lower Colorado Basins
Interior Regions 7 and 8

Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

Does not decide outcomes,
but shapes what is a legally
defensible final agency action

What the DEIS Means for Metropolitan

- Analyzes a range of post-2026 operations alternatives
- Describes modeling assumptions used to evaluate operational elements
- Identifies the impacts to Metropolitan's water supply, ICS, and Hoover power interests under each alternative

Post-2026 Draft
Environmental
Impact
Statement
(DEIS)

Comments due
March 2, 2026

Metropolitan's DEIS Engagement

- Metropolitan submitting independent DEIS comments
- Coordinating with:
 - Colorado River Board of California
 - Lower Basin States
- Technical and legal review underway across multiple Met groups

Anticipated Metropolitan DEIS Comments



Modeling assumptions



Legal authority and Law of the River interpretations



Water deliveries, shortages, and ICS



Hoover Dam hydropower generation



Water quality and protected species

Performance Indicator ¹				
	Basic Coordination Alternative	Maximum Operational Flexibility Alternative	Supply Driven Alternative (LB Priority)	Supply Driven Alternative (LB Pro Rata)
Seven-Reservoir (Flaming Gorge, Navajo, Blue Mesa, Powell, Mead, Mohave, and Havasu) combined storage capacity (median values across all flow categories)	Second lowest combined storage in all flow categories	Highest combined storage in all flow categories	Third lowest combined storage in all flow categories	Third highest combined storage in all flow categories
Annual Glen Canyon Dam EOWY releases under average and critically dry hydrology conditions (median values)	Releases of 8.23 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 6.82 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Releases of 8.17 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 5.68 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Releases of 8.39 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 5.96 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Releases of 8.39 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 5.96 maf in the critically dry flow category.
10-year Glen Canyon Dam releases under average and critically dry hydrology conditions (median values)	Releases of 81.5 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 74.7 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Releases of 80.9 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 70.8 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Releases of 83.0 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 73.4 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Releases of 83.0 maf in the average flow category. Releases of 73.4 maf in the critically dry flow category.
10-year Lee Ferry Compact Point flow volumes under average and critically dry hydrology conditions (median values)	Flows of 83.0 maf in the average flow category. Flows of 76.2 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Flows of 82.3 maf in the average flow category. Flows of 72.4 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Flows of 84.6 maf in the average flow category. Flows of 74.9 maf in the critically dry flow category.	Flows of 84.6 maf in the average flow category. Flows of 74.9 maf in the critically dry flow category.

Post-2026 Guidelines DEIS

Impacts to Lee Ferry Flows

This table shows the 10-year running average of flows under the Basic Coordination, Maximum Operational Flexibility, and Supply Driven (both by priority and pro rata) Alternatives. Most result in Lee Ferry flows near 75 maf/10- yrs and half of the Mexico Treaty obligation when flows average 12.4/yr but fall well below in the critically dry flow category.

Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

Not all geographic
or resource impacts
are analyzed

Key Takeaways from the DEIS

- Outcomes are highly sensitive to modeling assumptions
- Allocation method matters as much as total shortage volume
- Some modeled scenarios shows significant impacts to California and Metropolitan
- Hoover power impacts depend on Lake Mead elevations

Post-2026 Operational Guidelines

Interior and Reclamation set a February 14 deadline for the Basin States to reach a consensus on how Lake Powell and Lake Mead should be operated post-2026

Next Steps - February 14 Deadline

- Ongoing, iterative engagement:
 - Internal California meetings
 - Lower Basin States meetings
 - 7-Basin States meetings
- Working towards goal of submitting a 7-Basin State consensus letter to the Assistant Secretary

