



## • 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 the month of August 2022.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### Department of Interior Announcements Regarding 2023 Lake Powell and Lake Mead Operations

##### August 24-Month Study

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) released the Colorado River Basin August 2022 24-Month Study (24-Month Study), which is used to determine the operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead in 2023 in the Annual Operating Plan.

Lake Mead will operate in its first-ever Level 2a Shortage Condition in calendar year 2023. The 24-Month Study projects Lake Mead's January 1, 2023, operating determination elevation to be 1,047.61 feet, which is calculated by taking Lake Mead's projected end of calendar year 2022 physical elevation (1,040.78 feet) and adding 480,000 acre-feet of water held back from Lake Mead's capacity to maintain operational neutrality of the actions taken to protect Lake Powell. The projected elevation of 1,047.61 feet reflects a Level 2a Shortage Condition, within the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) elevation band of 1,045 and 1,050 feet, with required shortage reductions and water savings contribution for the Lower Basin States and Mexico, pursuant to Minute 323, as follows:

- Arizona: 592 thousand acre-feet (taf), which is approximately 21 percent of the state's annual apportionment
- Nevada: 25 taf, which is 8 percent of the state's annual apportionment
- Mexico: 104 taf, which is approximately 7 percent of the country's annual allotment
- There is no required water savings contribution for California in 2023 under this operating condition.

Lake Powell will operate in the Lower Elevation Balancing Tier in water year 2023. The 24-Month Study projects Lake Powell's January 1, 2023, water surface elevation to be 3,521 feet, 32 feet above minimum power pool of 3,490 feet. Lake Powell will likely release 7 million acre-feet (maf) in water year 2023 with the potential for Powell releases to range between 7 to 9.5 maf during water year 2023, depending on hydrologic conditions. Reclamation noted in its announcement that it will evaluate hydrologic conditions in April 2023 and will implement the Interim Guidelines Section 7.D by limiting water year 2023 releases (with a minimum of 7.0 maf) to protect Lake Powell from declining below 3,525 feet at the end of December 2023.

##### Call for Basin-Wide Conservation

In June 2022, Reclamation's Commissioner Camille Touton testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and called on water users across the Basin to take actions to prevent the reservoirs from falling to critically low elevations that would threaten water deliveries and power production. Since June, Reclamation has shared updated modeling results in the "Protection Volume Analysis" that show the need for between 600 taf and 4.2 maf annually of conserved or additional water to keep Lake Powell and Lake Mead above critically low levels.

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### Announcement of Reclamation Next Steps

In the Upper Basin, Reclamation will:

- Take administrative actions needed to authorize a reduction of Glen Canyon Dam releases below 7 maf per year, if needed, to protect critical infrastructure at Glen Canyon Dam. Operations below 7 maf are not covered in the 2007 Interim Guidelines.
- Accelerate ongoing maintenance actions and studies to determine and enhance projected reliability of the use of the river outlet works, commonly referred to as the bypass tubes, at Glen Canyon Dam for extended periods.
- Support technical studies to ascertain if physical modifications can be made to Glen Canyon Dam to allow water to be pumped or released from below currently identified critical and dead pool elevations.
- Continue to work with the Basin States, Basin Tribes, stakeholders and partners to be prepared to implement additional substantial releases from Upper Basin Reservoirs to help enhance reservoir elevations at Lake Powell under the DCP's Drought Response Operations Agreement.
- Invest in system conservation and voluntary agreements.
- Consider other operational actions to establish flexibility in Upper Basin operations at Reclamation facilities.

In the Lower Basin, Reclamation will:

- Take administrative actions needed to further define reservoir operations at Lake Mead, including shortage operations at elevations below 1,025 feet to reduce the risk of Lake Mead declining to critically low elevations.
- Prioritize and prepare for additional administrative initiatives that would ensure maximum efficient and beneficial use of urban and agricultural water, and address evaporation, seepage, and other system losses in the Lower Basin.
- Support technical studies to ascertain if physical modifications can be made to Hoover Dam to allow water to be pumped/released from elevations below currently identified dead pool elevations.
- Invest in system conservation and voluntary agreements.
- Consider other operational actions to establish flexibility in Lower Basin operations at Reclamation facilities.

The Department of Interior also announced that it will continue to seek consensus support and will be based on a continued commitment to engage with partners across the Basin States, Basin Tribes, and the country of Mexico to ensure all communities that rely on the Colorado River will provide contributions toward the solutions. The announcement highlighted the \$8.3 billion of funds for water and drought in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the inclusion of \$4 billion in funding specifically for water management and conservation in the Colorado River Basin and basins affected by drought.