



## ● 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 April 2023.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### **2007 Interim Guidelines Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Published**

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) published the draft SEIS in the Federal Register on April 15, with the 45-day public comment period ending on Tuesday, May 30, 2023. The draft SEIS considers two action alternatives and a no action alternative. Alternatives 1 and 2 include reduced releases from Glen Canyon Dam and new shortages in the Lower Basin that total up to 2.083 million acre-feet (maf) in 2024 and increase in 2025-26. Alternative 1 models new Lower Basin shortages assessed by priority. Alternative 2 includes assumptions for reduced releases that are distributed in the same percentage across all Lower Basin contractors. Reclamation will hold four virtual public meetings to provide information on the draft SEIS, answer questions, and receive oral comments. Additional information about the SEIS may be found at: <https://www.usbr.gov/ColoradoRiverBasin/SEIS.html>. Staff will provide an overview of the draft SEIS at the May One Water Committee.

#### **Reclamation's April 24-Month Study Released**

Colorado River Basin snowpack peaked on April 7 at 161 percent of the 30-year average, which is well above the projected conditions in the 2022 August 24-Month Study, which was used to plan operations of the Colorado River System reservoirs in 2023. Water Year (WY) 2023 unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is forecasted to be 151 percent of the 30-year average. Lake Powell operations for WY 2023 are in the Lower Elevation Balancing Tier, which seeks to balance the storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Based on the April 24-Month Study, balancing releases of 9.5 maf will be made from Lake Powell to Lake Mead. This is the highest release amount in more than 10 years. Reclamation announced that it will resume use of actual reservoir elevations in tier determination and will no longer use operational neutrality, and that modeling will assume the 480 thousand acre-feet retained in Lake Powell under the May 2022 action was released as part of the WY 2023 balancing release. The 2022 Drought Response Operations Agreement (DROA) releases were suspended on March 7. Reclamation will pursue recovery of the DROA releases in Flaming Gorge during the remainder of the water year. Lower Basin intervening flows are forecasted to be much higher than average. The most probable end-of-year elevation at Lake Powell is 3,573 feet, which would put it in the Mid-Elevation Release Tier in WY 2024. According to the April 24-Month Study most probable forecast, Lake Mead will rise by more than 20 feet this year, reaching an elevation of 1,068 feet at the end-of-year, which would trigger tier 1 shortages and Drought Contingency Plan Contributions from Arizona, Nevada, and Mexico, but not California in WY 2024.