Colorado River Board of California

February 29, 2024

NOTICE REGULAR MEETING OF THE COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to the call of the Chairman, J.B. Hamby, by the undersigned Executive Director of the Colorado River Board of California that a regular meeting of the members of the board is to be held as follows:

Board Meeting	
Date:	Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Time:	**10:00 AM**
Place:	City Hall – Council Chamber 69-825 Highway 111 Rancho Mirage, CA 92270

The Colorado River Board of California welcomes any comments from members of the public pertaining to items included on this agenda and related topics. Members of the public may provide comments in the following ways: (1) Oral comments can be provided at the beginning of each board meeting; and (2) Public comments may be submitted by electronic mail, addressed to the board's Chairman, J.B. Hamby, at crb@crb.ca.gov and will be accepted up until 5:00 p.m. on March 11, 2023. Please note, written submissions will be read aloud at the public comment period to the extent they fit within the five-minute time limit.

If accommodations for individuals with disabilities are required, such persons should provide a request at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting by electronic mail to board staff at crb@crb.ca.gov.

Requests for additional information may be directed to: Mr. Christopher S. Harris, Executive Director, Colorado River Board of California, 770 Fairmont Avenue, Suite 100, Glendale, CA 91203-1068. A copy of this Notice and Agenda may be found on the Colorado River Board's web page at www.crb.ca.gov.

A copy of the meeting agenda, showing the matters to be considered and transacted, is attached.

Colorado River Board of California

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 — 10:00 AM

At the discretion of the board, all items appearing on this agenda, whether or not expressly listed for action, may be deliberated upon and may be subject to action by the board. Items may not necessarily be taken up in the order shown.

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 minutes.)

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: BASIN STATES ALTERNATIVE

REPORTS

1. Local and State Water Supply and Operations Reports
2. Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Operations Reports
3. Colorado River Basin Programs Staff Reports
4. Member Agency and Public Member Reports
5. Executive Director's Report
6. Chairman's Report

EXECUTIVE SESSION[1]

OTHER BUSINESS

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

[1] An Executive Session may be held by the Board pursuant to provisions of Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code and Sections 12516 and 12519 of the Water Code to discuss matters concerning interstate claims to the use of Colorado River System waters in judicial proceedings, administrative proceedings, and/or negotiations with representatives from the other Basin states or federal government.

Colorado River Board of California

ADJOURNMENT

Next Scheduled Board Meeting	
Date:	Wednesday, April 10, 2024
Time:	10:00 AM
Place:	Hemet, CA TBD

3/4/2024

LOWER COLORADO WATER SUPPLY REPORT

River Operations
Bureau of Reclamation

Questions: BCOOWaterops@usbr.gov
(702)293-8373
http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/weekly.pdf

CURRENT STORAGE	PERCENT FULL	Content 1000 ac-ft (kaf)	Elev. (Feet above mean sea level)	7-Day Release (CFS)
LAKE POWELL	34%	7,911	3,561.74	11,200
* LAKE MEAD	37%	9,731	1,076.60	10,600
LAKE MOHAVE	92%	1,667	641.85	10,600
LAKE HAVASU	89%	549	446.37	7,800
TOTAL SYSTEM CONTENTS **	43%	24,859		
As of 3/3/2024				
SYSTEM CONTENT LAST YEAR	32%	18,911		

*Percent based on capacity of 26,120 kaf or elevation 1,219.6 feet.
**Total System Contents includes Upper & Lower Colorado River Reservoirs, less Lake Mead exclusive flood control space.

Salt/Verde System	84%	1,936		
Painted Rock Dam	0%	0	530.00	0
Alamo Dam	14%	137	1,124.55	20

Forecasted Water Use for Calendar Year 2024 (as of 03/04/2024) (values in kaf)

NEVADA	205	
SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER SYSTEM		193
OTHERS		11
CALIFORNIA	4,286	
METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA		982
IRRIGATION DISTRICTS		3,286
OTHERS		18
ARIZONA	2,005	
CENTRAL ARIZONA PROJECT		890
OTHERS		1,115
TOTAL LOWER BASIN USE		6,496
DELIVERY TO MEXICO - 2024 (Mexico Scheduled Delivery + Preliminary Yearly Excess[1])		1,454

OTHER SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION
UNREGULATED INFLOW INTO LAKE POWELL - FEBRUARY MID-MONTH FORECAST DATED 2/16/2024

	MILLION ACRE-FEET	% of Normal
FORECASTED WATER YEAR 2024	7.576	79%
FORECASTED APRIL-JULY 2024	4.900	77%
JANUARY OBSERVED INFLOW	0.283	84%
FEBRUARY INFLOW FORECAST	0.365	100%

	Upper Colorado Basin	Salt/Verde Basin
WATER YEAR 2024 PRECIP TO DATE	102% (14.5")	78% (10.8")
CURRENT BASIN SNOWPACK	105% (13.4")	87% (4.7")

[1]Delivery to Mexico forecasted yearly excess calculated using year-to-date observed and projected excess.

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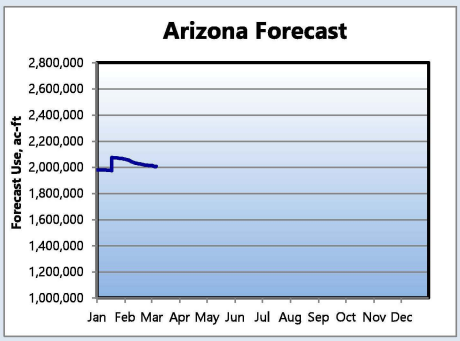
— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

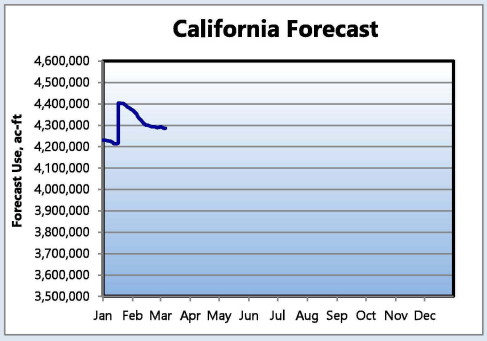
LOWER COLORADO BASIN REGION
CY 2024

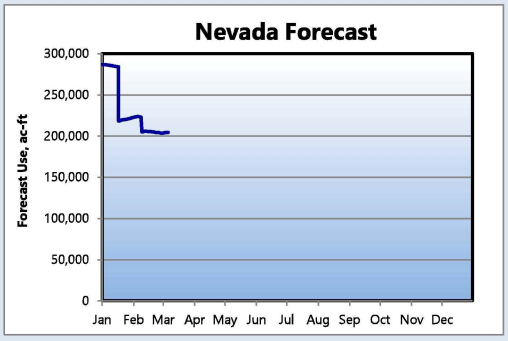
ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, MEXICO
FORECAST OF END OF YEAR CONSUMPTIVE USE
FORECAST BASED ON USE TO DATE AND ANNUAL WATER ORDERS [1]
(ACRE-FEET)

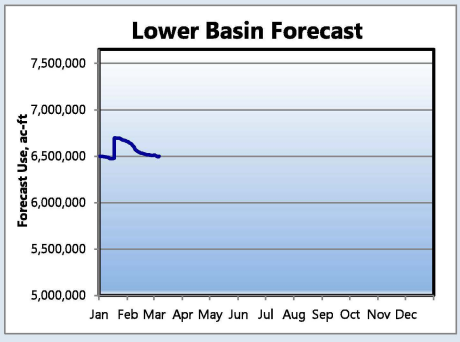
WATER USE SUMMARY	Use To Date CY 2024	Forecast Use CY 2024	Approved Use [2] CY 2024	Excess to Approval CY 2024
Arizona	163,003	2,007,218	1,981,644	**25,574**
California	361,532	4,285,953	4,234,834	**51,119**
Nevada	13,841	204,369	204,369	0
States Total [3]	**538,376**	**6,497,540**	**6,420,847**	**76,693**
Total Deliveries to Mexico [4]	212,473	1,420,000	1,420,000	
Creation of Mexico's Recoverable Water Savings [5]	0	30,000	30,000	
Creation of Mexico's Water Reserve [6]	0	0	0	
Total to Mexico in Satisfaction of Treaty Requirements [7]	212,473	1,450,000	1,450,000	
To Mexico in Excess of Treaty [8]	10,183	33,434	27,417	
Water Bypassed Pursuant to IBWC Minute 242 [9]	24,776	121,051	117,909	
Total Lower Basin & Mexico [10]	**785,808**	**8,072,025**	**7,986,173**	

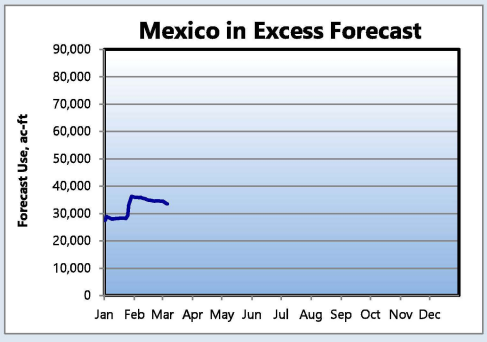
[1] Incorporates 80 daily reporting stations which may be revised after provisional data reports are distributed by the USGS. Use to date is estimated for users reporting monthly and annually.
[2] These values reflect adjusted apportionments. See Adjusted Apportionment calculation on each state page.
[3] Includes unmeasured returns based on estimated consumptive use/diversion ratios by user from studies provided by Arizona Department of Water Resources, Colorado River Board of California, and Reclamation.
[4] Includes deliveries to Mexico at the Northerly International Boundary, Southerly International Boundary, Limitrophe, and Diversion Channel Discharge; and diversions at Parker Dam for Emergency Delivery to Tijuana to meet Mexico's schedule. Does not include Creation of Mexico's Water Reserve or Creation of Mexico's Recoverable Water Savings.
[5] Water deferred by Mexico pursuant to Section IV of IBWC Minute 323 and the *Joint Report of the Principal Engineers with the Implementing Details of the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan in the Colorado River Basin* dated July 11, 2019. (Mexico's required Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan Contribution).
[6] Water deferred by Mexico pursuant to Section V of IBWC Minute 323.
[7] In accordance with Section XI.G.2.D.1.a of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, a Tier 1 Shortage Condition will govern the operation of Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River in 2024. In accordance with Section III.A of Minute 323, Mexico's scheduled deliveries incorporate the required reduction of 50,000 AF from its 1.5 million AF Colorado River water allotment. "Total to Mexico in Satisfaction of Treaty Requirements" adds in creation of Mexico's Recoverable Water Savings and Mexico's Water Reserve.
[8] "To Mexico in Excess of Treaty" forecast is based on the 5-year average for the period 2018-2022.
[9] "Water Bypassed Pursuant to IBWC Minute 242" forecast is based on the average for the period 1990-2022.
[10] Includes States Total, Total Deliveries to Mexico, To Mexico in Excess of Treaty, and Water Bypassed Pursuant IBWC Minute 242.

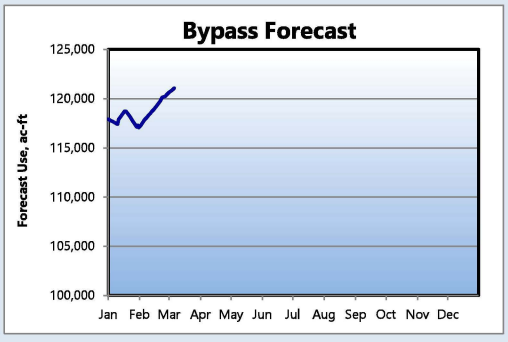












Graph notes: January 1 forecast use is scheduled use in accordance with the Annual Operating Plan's state entitlements, available unused entitlements, and over-run paybacks. A downward sloping line indicates use at a lower rate than scheduled, upward sloping is above schedule, and a flat line indicates a use rate equal to schedule. Lower priority users such as CAP, MWD, and Robt.B.Griffith may adjust use rates to meet state entitlements as higher priority use deviates from schedule. Abrupt changes in the forecast use line may be due to a diversion schedule change or monthly updating of provisional realtime diversions.

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BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

LOWER COLORADO BASIN REGION
CY 2024

NOTE:
- Diversions and uses that are pending approval are noted in *red italics*.
- Water users with a consumptive use entitlement - **Excess to Estimated Use** column indicates overrun/underrun of entitlement. Dash in this column indicates water user has a diversion entitlement.
- Water user with a diversion entitlement - **Excess to Approved Diversion** column indicates overrun/underrun of entitlement. Dash in this column indicates water user has a consumptive use entitlement.

ARIZONA WATER USERS

Forecast end of year diversion/consumptive use

Forecast based on use to date and approved annual water orders

Arizona Schedules and Approvals

Historical Use Records (Water Accounting Reports)

WATER USER	Use To Date CY 2024	Forecast Use CY 2024	Estimated Use CY 2024	Excess to Estimated Use CY 2024	Diversion To Date CY 2024	Forecast Diversion CY 2024	Approved Diversion CY 2024	Excess to Approved Diversion CY 2024
TV Marble Canyon, AZ LLC	1	10	10	---	2	15	15	0
Lake Mead NRA, AZ - Diversions from Lake Mead	4	65	65	---	4	65	65	0
Lake Mead NRA, AZ - Diversions from Lake Mohave	42	224	224	---	42	224	224	0
McAlister Family Trust	1	7	7	---	1	10	10	0
Bureau of Reclamation - Davis Dam Project	0	2	2	---	1	9	9	0
Bullhead City	1,139	8,799	8,799	---	1,803	13,730	13,730	0
Mohave Water Conservation District	123	854	854	---	183	1,275	1,275	0
Mohave Valley I.D.D.[1]	1,677	12,267	12,267	---	3,107	22,716	22,716	0
Fort Mojave Indian Reservation, AZ	1,859	41,759	46,167	---	3,778	77,674	85,500	-7,826
Golden Shores Water Conservation District	41	289	289	---	62	433	433	0
Havasu National Wildlife Refuge	261	3,512	3,564	---	2,170	40,336	41,835	-1,499
EPCOR Water Arizona, Inc. - CSA No. 1	96	595	595	---	149	916	916	0
Crystal Beach Water Conservation District	10	73	73	---	16	112	112	0
Lake Havasu City	1,235	9,052	9,052	---	1,992	14,600	14,600	0
Arizona State Parks (Windsor Beach)	1	9	9	---	2	14	14	0
Central Arizona Water Conservation District [2]	125,869	890,554		---	125,869	890,554		--
Springs Del Sol Domestic Water Improvement District	0	2	2	---	0	3	3	0
Hillcrest Water Company	3	18	18	---	4	27	27	0
Frontier Communications West Coast	0	1	1	---	0	1	1	0
Town of Parker	38	388	388	---	115	897	897	0
EPCOR Water Arizona, Inc. - CSA No. 2 (formerly Brooke Water, LLC)	48	318	318	---	71	474	474	0
Colorado River Indian Reservation, AZ	-4,209	335,324	360,641	---	32,485	626,448	662,402	-35,954
GM Gabrych Family	0	0	0	---	0	0	0	0
Ehrenberg Improvement District	37	257	257	---	56	391	391	0
B&F Investment	1	7	7	---	1	10	10	0
North Baja Pipeline	30	208	208	---	46	320	320	0
Arizona State Land Department - Domestic	10	57	57	---	15	87	87	0
Cibola Island	104	728	728	---	146	1,018	1,018	0
Cibola Valley I.D.D.	220	3,284	3,284	---	308	4,593	4,593	0
Red River Land Co.	0	214	214	---	0	300	300	0
Hopi Tribe	0	0	0	---	0	0	0	0
GSC Farms, LLC	0	0	0	---	0	0	0	0
Arizona Game & Fish	0	2,032	2,032	---	0	2,838	2,838	0
Western Water, LLC	6	379	379	---	8	530	530	0
Bishop Family Trust	43	300	300	---	60	420	420	0
Cathcarts	1	6	6	---	1	8	8	0
Cibola Sportsman's Club	22	154	154	---	31	216	216	0
Cibola National Wildlife Refuge	520	15,575	15,575	0	839	25,122	25,122	0
Imperial National Wildlife Refuge	696	4,717	4,717	0	1,124	7,610	7,610	0
BLM - Leased by L. Pratt	4	25	25	---	6	39	39	0
BLM Permittees (Parker Dam to Imperial Dam)	187	1,302	1,302	0	287	2,003	2,003	--
Martinez Lake Cabin Sites	1	7	7		2	11	11	
Fisher's Landing Water and Sewer, LLC	1	8	8	---	2	12	12	0
Shepard Water Company	2	16	16	---	4	25	25	0
U.S. Army Yuma Proving Grounds	55	421	421	---	55	421	421	0
JRJ Partners, LLC	89	618	618	---	136	950	950	0
Cha Cha, LLC	124	1,365	1,365	---	189	2,100	2,100	0
Beattie Farms Southwest	36	722	722	---	55	1,110	1,110	0
Gila Monster Farm	363	4,423	4,812	---	662	7,801	8,500	-699
Wellton-Mohawk I.D.D.	12,367	261,665	278,000	-16,335	30,147	398,140	424,350	-26,210
BLM Permittees (Below Imperial Dam)	16	114	114	0	25	175	175	--
City of Yuma	796	13,869	15,548	-1,679	2,255	25,133	27,500	-2,367
U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Yuma	127	1,196	1,219	---	127	1,196	1,219	-23
Union Pacific Railroad	4	29	29	---	8	48	48	0
University of Arizona	90	839	839	---	90	839	839	0
Yuma Union High School District	13	150	150	---	17	200	200	0
Desert Lawn Memorial	4	28	28	---	6	40	40	0
North Gila Valley Irrigation District	347	8,844	9,231	---	3,180	41,103	43,500	-2,397
Yuma Irrigation District	3,598	37,744	38,977	---	6,080	69,867	73,400	-3,533
Yuma Mesa I.D.D.	-3,355	58,793	62,410	---	10,981	182,303	188,219	-5,916
Unit "B" I.D.D.	-426	10,188	10,474	---	1,794	27,338	28,300	-962

WATER USER	Use To Date CY 2024	Forecast Use CY 2024	Estimated Use CY 2024	Excess to Estimated Use CY 2024	Diversion To Date CY 2024	Forecast Diversion CY 2024	Approved Diversion CY 2024	Excess to Approved Diversion CY 2024
Arizona State Land Department - Agriculture	486	4,295	4,295		749	6,607	6,607	0
Ott Family	36	248	248		55	382	382	0
Ogram Boys' Enterprises	82	574	574		127	883	883	0
Fort Yuma Indian Reservation	448	3,121	3,121	---	689	4,801	4,801	0
BLM - Leased by M. Lee	21	148	148		33	227	227	0
Armon Curtis	19	129	129		28	198	198	0
Yuma County Water Users' Association	17,291	261,609	279,319	---	34,257	350,089	367,300	-17,211
R. Griffin	5	32	32		7	49	49	0
Power	15	103	103		23	158	158	0
Cocopah Indian Tribe (PPR No. 7)	37	256	256		57	394	394	0
Griffin Ranches (PPR No. 7)	14	98	98		22	150	150	0
Milton Phillips (PPR No. 7)	8	55	55		12	85	85	0
Griffin Family Ltd. Partnership (PPR No. 7)	3	23	23		5	35	35	0
Cocopah Indian Reservation	144	1,823	1,821	---	144	2,736	2,812	-76
Reclamation - Yuma Area Office	14	100	100	---	14	100	100	0
Arizona Public Service Company	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Gary Pasquinelli	8	198	198		12	305	305	0
Total Arizona	**163,003**	**2,007,218**	**2,086,026**		**266,833**	**2,862,049**	**2,974,096**	
Central Arizona Project (CAP) [2]	125,869	890,554				890,554		
All Others	37,134	1,116,664	1,188,086			1,971,477	2,076,150	
Yuma Mesa Division, Gila Project	590	105,381	110,618	-5,237		293,273		
Total 242 Well Field Pumping [3]	11,206	56,185	56,130					

ARIZONA ADJUSTED APPORTIONMENT CALCULATION

Arizona Basic Apportionment		2,800,000
Reduction for Tier 1 Shortage [4]		(320,000)
Reduction for Arizona DCP Contributions [5]		(192,000)
System Conservation Water - Pilot System Conservation Program [6]		(400)
System Conservation Water – CAP Subcontractors [7,8]		(129,400)
System Conservation Water – Cathcarts [7,9]		(61)
System Conservation Water – CVIDD [7,10]		(2,007)
System Conservation Water – FMYN [7,11]		(13,933)
System Conservation Water – GM Gabrych [7,12]		(3,240)
System Conservation Water – GRIC [7,13]		(125,000)
System Conservation Water – Hopi [7,14]		(3,059)
System Conservation Water - MVIDD [7,15]		(13,441)
System Conservation Water - YMIDD [7,16]		(21,795)
System Conservation Water - Reclamation (Estimated) [7,17]		(25,000)
Delivery of ICS (CAWCD) [18]	up to	30,980
Total State Adjusted Apportionment		1,981,644
Excess to Total State Adjusted Apportionment		25,574
Estimated Allowable Use for CAP		**864,987**

[1] Approved/forecasted values include up to 1,250 AF of diversion for domestic use pursuant to MVIDD's Subcontract No. 09-101 with the Mohave County Water Authority.

[2] Forecast Use incorporates CAWCD's operational schedule. Amount shown includes the diversion of up to 2,033 AF to be delivered via the CAP to the Town of Queen Creek pursuant to Reclamation Wheeling Contract No. 20-XX-30-W0691 and the diversion of 72,000 AF of Arizona third priority Colorado River water to be delivered via the CAP to fulfill water rights settlements pursuant to the Stipulated Judgment and the Stipulation for Judgment entered on November 21, 2007.

[3] In accordance with the Colorado River Water Conservation Letter Agreement 16-XX-30-W0603, Revision No. 1 (Revised Letter Agreement) between Reclamation and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD), pumping above the Historical Average Baseline (31,129 AF), up to 32,000 AF per year, will remain in Lake Mead as Colorado River System water.

[4] In accordance with Section XI.G.2.D.1.a of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, a Tier 1 Shortage Condition will govern the operation of Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River in 2024, resulting in a 320,000 AF reduction to the state of Arizona's Colorado River basic apportionment.

[5] In accordance with Section III.B.1.a of *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Operations* (LBOps), the state of Arizona is required to make DCP Contributions of 192,000 AF in 2024.

[6] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created by the City of Bullhead City pursuant to System Conservation Implementation Agreement (SCIA) No. 15-XX-30-W0587, as amended. This System Conservation Water will remain in Lake Mead to benefit system storage.

[7] In accordance with the applicable conservation agreements, Section 3.b of the *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan Agreement* dated May 20, 2019 (LB DCP Agreement), and Section II.3.e of the *Agreement Regarding Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan Obligations,* this System Conservation Water will remain in Colorado River reservoirs in the Lower Basin to benefit system storage. The Bureau of Reclamation intends to apply this water towards the Secretary of the Interior's commitment to create or conserve 100,000 AF per annum or more of Colorado River System water to contribute to conservation of water supplies in Lake Mead and other Colorado River reservoirs in the Lower Basin.

[8] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created by certain CAP Subcontractors pursuant to executed SCIAs.

[9] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0776.

[10] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0771.

[11] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0750.

[12] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0774.

[13] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0760.

[14] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0779

[15] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0770.

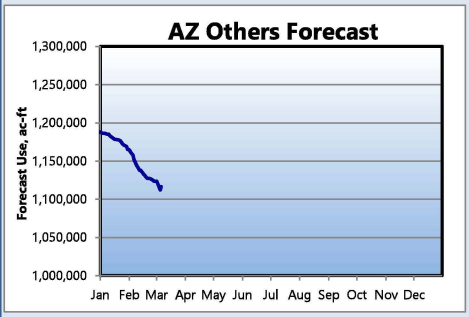
Footnotes continued on next page.

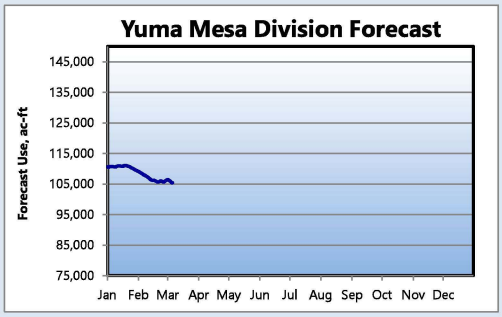
Footnotes continued from previous page.

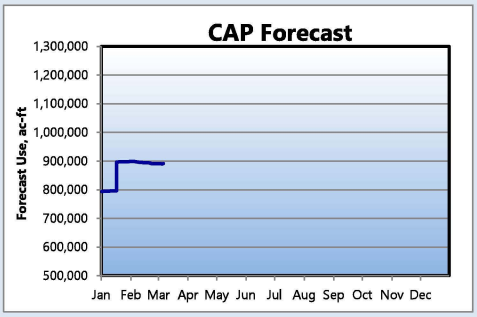
[16] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No.23-XX-30-W0769.

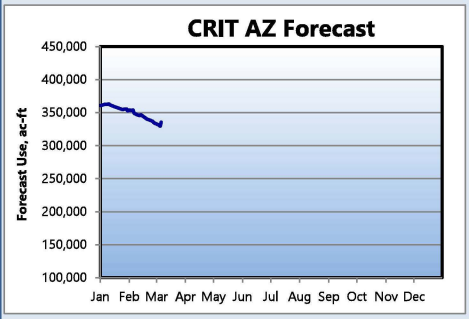
[17] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created by additional pumping from the 242 Well Field Expansion pursuant to Letter Agreement No. 16-XX-30-W0603, Revision No. 1, which will remain in Lake Mead to benefit system storage

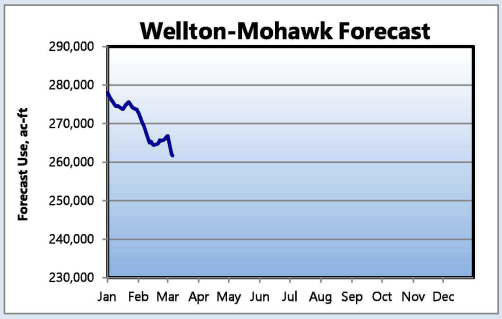
[18] The maximum amount of EC ICS delivery per CAWCD's approved water order. Actual amount of EC ICS delivered will be based on final accounting records.

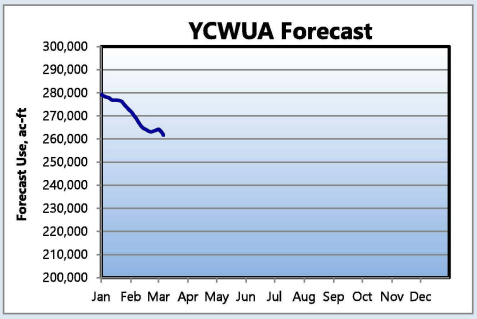












NOTES: Click on Arizona Schedules and Approvals above for incoming diversion schedules and approvals.

— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

LOWER COLORADO BASIN REGION
CY 2024

NOTE:
- Diversions and uses that are pending approval are noted in *red italics*.
- Water users with a consumptive use entitlement - **Excess to Estimated Use** column indicates overrun/underrun of entitlement. Dash in this column indicates water user has a diversion entitlement.
- Water user with a diversion entitlement - **Excess to Approved Diversion** column indicates overrun/underrun of entitlement. Dash in this column indicates water user has a consumptive use entitlement.

CALIFORNIA WATER USERS
Forecast end of year diversion/consumptive use
Forecast based on use to date and approved annual water orders
California Schedules and Approvals
Historical Use Records (Water Accounting Reports)

WATER USER	Use To Date CY 2024	Forecast Use CY 2024	Estimated Use CY 2024	Excess to Estimated Use CY 2024	Diversion To Date CY 2024	Forecast Diversion CY 2024	Approved Diversion CY 2024	Excess to Approved Diversion CY 2024
Fort Mojave Indian Reservation, CA	231	8,220	8,994	---	540	15,393	16,720	-1,327
City of Needles (includes LCWSP use)	193	1,605	1,605	0	273	2,261	2,261	0
PPR No. 30 (Stephenson)	2	16	16	---	4	29	29	0
PPR No. 38 (Andrade)	3	23	23	---	6	41	41	---
PPR No. 40 (Cooper)	1	6	6	---	1	10	10	---
Chemehuevi Indian Reservation	26	184	184	---	1,627	11,340	11,340	0
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California [1]	103,505	983,350		---	104,135	985,956		---
Colorado River Indian Reservation, CA	628	4,380	4,380	---	1,041	7,258	7,258	0
Palo Verde Irrigation District	2,840	372,850	400,228	---	59,950	794,176	826,000	-31,824
PPR No. 31 (Mendivil)	0	3	3	---	1	5	5	0
Yuma Project Reservation Division	275	42,209	46,515	---	6,209	90,712	95,734	-5,022
Yuma Project Reservation Division - Bard Unit	---	---	---	---	3,241	47,306	49,800	-2,494
Yuma Project Reservation Division - Indian Unit	---	---	---	---	2,968	43,407	45,934	-2,527
Fort Yuma Indian Reservation - Ranch 5 (Surface Delivery)	103	1,194	1,194	---	187	2,160	2,160	0
Fort Yuma Indian Reservation - Other Ranches (Pumpers)	279	1,948	1,948	---	505	3,522	3,522	0
Yuma Island Pumpers	286	1,997	1,997	---	518	3,613	3,613	0
Imperial Irrigation District [2]	224,130	2,520,015	2,612,800	-92,785	231,688	2,675,426	2,782,987	---
Coachella Valley Water District	28,952	347,404	359,000	-11,596	29,971	370,217	383,674	---
Other LCWSP Contractors	71	497	497	---	109	761	761	0
City of Winterhaven	7	52	52	---	11	75	75	0
Total California	**361,532**	**4,285,953**	**4,418,780**		**436,776**	**4,962,955**	**5,117,928**	

CALIFORNIA ADJUSTED APPORTIONMENT CALCULATION

California Basic Apportionment	4,400,000
System Conservation Water - Pilot System Conservation Program [3]	(145)
System Conservation Water - CVWD [4,5]	(35,000)
System Conservation Water - MWD/PVID Fallowing Program [4,6]	(117,021)
System Conservation Water -Quechan Indian Tribe [4,7]	(13,000)
Creation of Extraordinary Conservation ICS [8]	0
Total State Adjusted Apportionment	4,234,834
Excess to Total State Adjusted Apportionment	51,119

Estimated Allowable Use for MWD **932,231**

[1] Forecast Use is based on MWD's operational projected diversion of 0.982 MAF as modeled in the January 24-Month Study.

[2] IID's total approved consumptive use is 2,622,800 AF, of which up to 10,000 AF is anticipated to be supplied from the LCWSP.

[3] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created by the City of Needles pursuant to System Conservation Implementation Agreement (SCIA) No. 15-XX-30-W0596, which will remain in Lake Mead to benefit system storage.

[4] In accordance with the applicable system conservation agreements and Section 3.b of the *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan Agreement* dated May 20, 2019, the Bureau of Reclamation intends to apply all or a portion of this water towards the Secretary of the Interior's commitment to create or conserve 100,000 AF per annum or more of Colorado River System water to contribute to conservation of water supplies in Lake Mead and other Colorado River reservoirs in the Lower Basin. This System Conservation Water will remain in Lake Mead to benefit system storage.

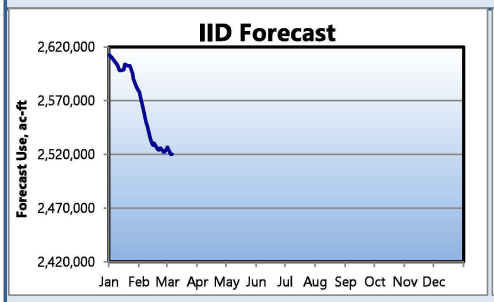
[5] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0764.

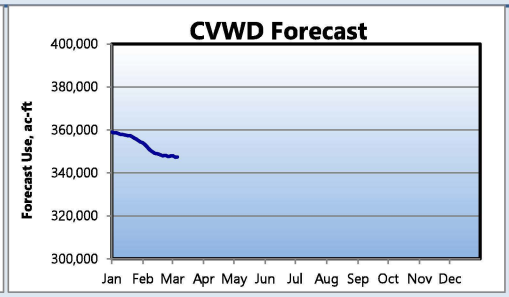
[6] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0772.

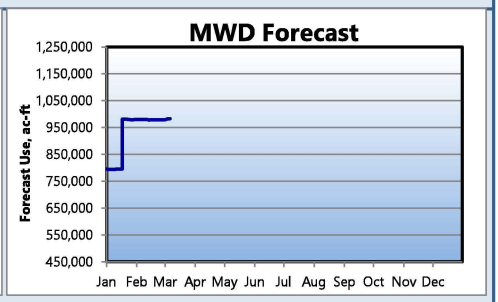
[7] The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0783.

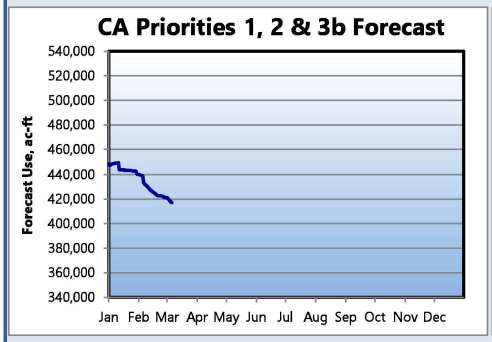
[8] MWD has an approved ICS Plan for the creation of up to 450,000 AF of Extraordinary Conservation (EC) ICS in 2024. The actual amount of EC ICS created by MWD in 2024 will be based on final accounting and verification. In accordance with Section XI.G.3.B.4 of the 2007 Interim Guidelines and Section IV.B of *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Operations* (LBOps), the total amount of EC ICS that may be created by the states of Arizona, California, and Nevada in 2024 will be limited to 625,000 AF. Additionally, the total amount of EC ICS, Binational ICS and DCP ICS accumulated in Arizona, California and Nevada's ICS Accounts will be limited in accordance with Section IV.C. of LBOps.

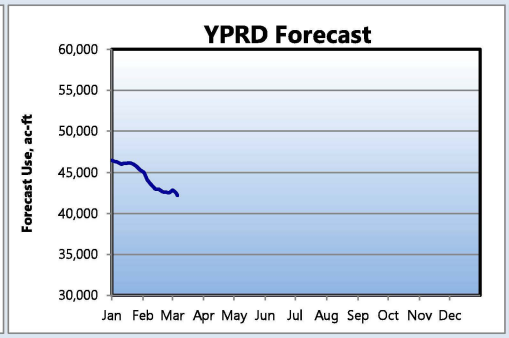
Continued on next page.

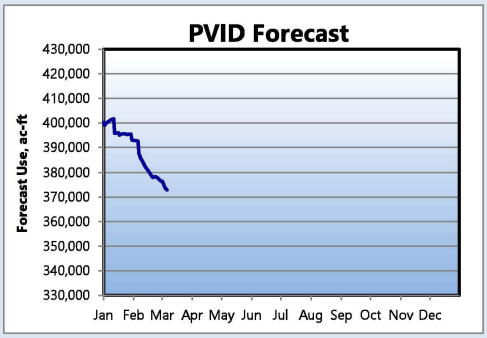












NOTES: Click on California Schedules and Approvals above for incoming diversion schedules and approvals.

Mar 06, 2024 10:16:08 AM

— BUREAU OF — RECLAMATION

LOWER COLORADO BASIN REGION
CY 2024

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- Water user with a diversion entitlement - **Excess to Approved Diversion** column indicates overrun/underrun of entitlement. Dash in this column indicates water user has a consumptive use entitlement.

NEVADA WATER USERS

Forecast end of year diversion/consumptive use

Forecast based on use to date and approved annual water orders

Nevada Schedules and Approvals

Historical Use Records (Water Accounting Reports)

WATER USER	Use To Date CY 2024	Forecast Use CY 2024	Estimated Use CY 2024	Excess to Estimated Use CY 2024	Diversion To Date CY 2024	Forecast Diversion CY 2024	Approved Diversion CY 2024	Excess to Approved Diversion CY 2024
Robert B. Griffith Water Project (SNWS)	59,513	430,686		---	59,513	430,686		---
Lake Mead NRA, NV - Diversions from Lake Mead	124	1,500	1,500	---	124	1,500	1,500	0
Lake Mead NRA, NV - Diversions from Lake Mohave	48	500	500	---	48	500	500	0
Basic Management, Inc.	0	0	0	---	0	0	0	0
City of Henderson (BMI Delivery)	0	0	0	---	0	0	0	0
Nevada Department of Wildlife	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	---
Pacific Coast Building Products, Inc.	72	928	928	---	72	928	928	0
Boulder Canyon Project	26	180	180	---	43	300	300	0
Big Bend Water District	324	4,823	4,823	---	813	10,000	10,000	0
Fort Mojave Indian Tribe	115	3,515	3,683	---	171	5,250	5,500	-250
Las Vegas Wash Return Flows	-46,381	-237,763	-232,886	---				
Total Nevada [1]	**13,841**	**204,369**	**212,000**	**0**	**60,784**	**449,164**	**452,000**	**-250**
Southern Nevada Water System (SNWS)	13,132	192,923				430,686		
All Others	709	11,446				18,478		
Nevada Uses Above Hoover	13,354	195,531				433,414		
Nevada Uses Below Hoover	487	8,838				15,750		

Tributary Conservation (TC) Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS)

Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) Creation of TC ICS (Approved) [2]	44,000

NEVADA ADJUSTED APPORTIONMENT CALCULATION

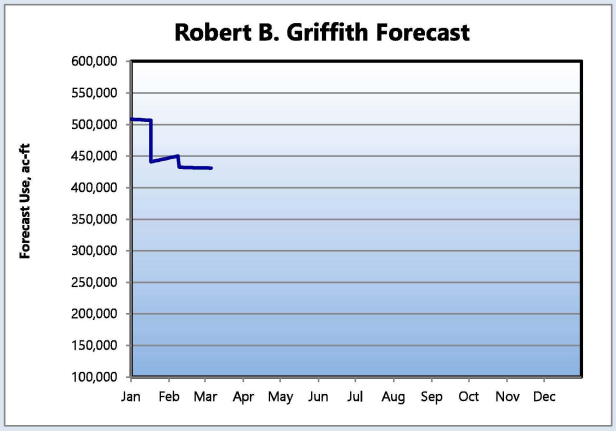
Nevada Basic Apportionment	300,000
Reduction for Tier 1 Shortage [3]	(13,000)
Creation of Extraordinary Conservation ICS - SNWA (Estimated) [4]	(82,631)
Total State Adjusted Apportionment	204,369
Excess to Total State Adjusted Apportionment	0

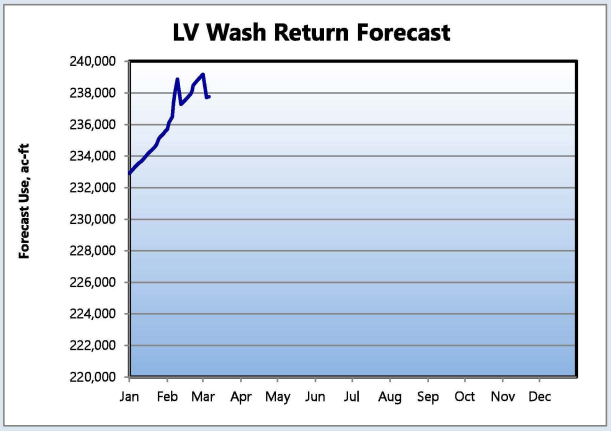
[1] The State of Nevada has been approved to consumptively use up to 287,000 AF in CY 2024. Forecast Use shown here is based on Nevada's operational projected consumptive use of 212,000 AF.

[2] SNWA has an approved ICS Plan for the creation of up to 44,000 AF of TC ICS in 2024. The actual amount of TC ICS created by SNWA in 2024 will be based on final accounting and verification.

[3] In accordance with Section XI.G.2.D.1.a of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, a Tier 1 Shortage Condition will govern the operation of Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River in 2024, resulting in a 13,000 AF reduction to the state of Nevada's Colorado River basic apportionment.

[4] SNWA has an approved ICS Plan for the creation of up to 100,000 AF of Extraordinary Conservation (EC) ICS in 2024. The actual amount of EC ICS created by SNWA in 2024 will be based on final accounting and verification. In accordance with Section XI.G.3.B.4 of the 2007 Interim Guidelines and Section IV.B of *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Operations* (LBOps), the total amount of EC ICS that may be created by the states of Arizona, California, and Nevada in 2024 will be limited to 625,000 AF. Additionally, the total amount of EC ICS, Binational ICS, and DCP ICS accumulated in Arizona, California, and Nevada's ICS Accounts will be limited in accordance with Section IV.C of LBOps.



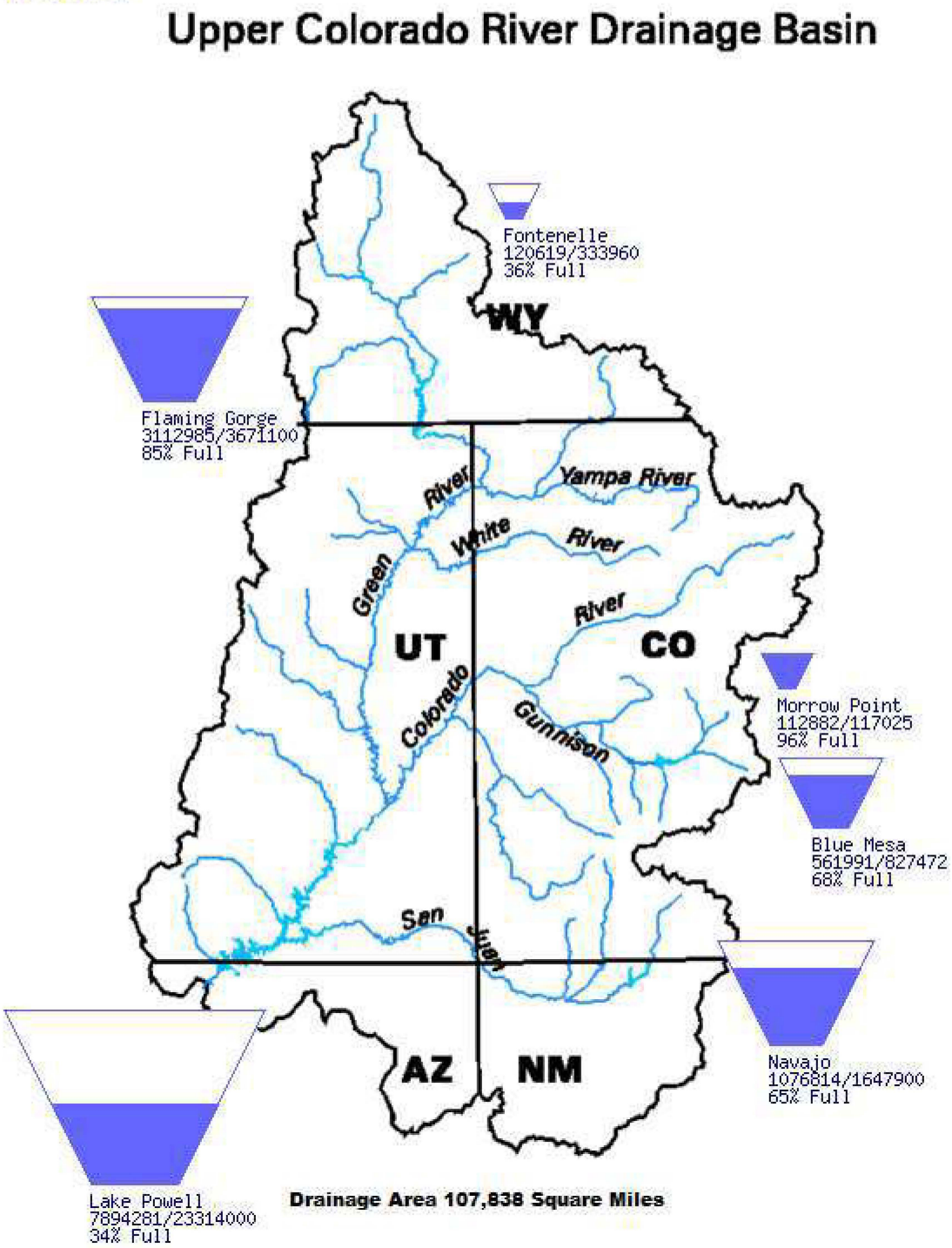


NOTES: Click on Nevada Schedules and Approvals above for incoming diversion schedules and approvals.

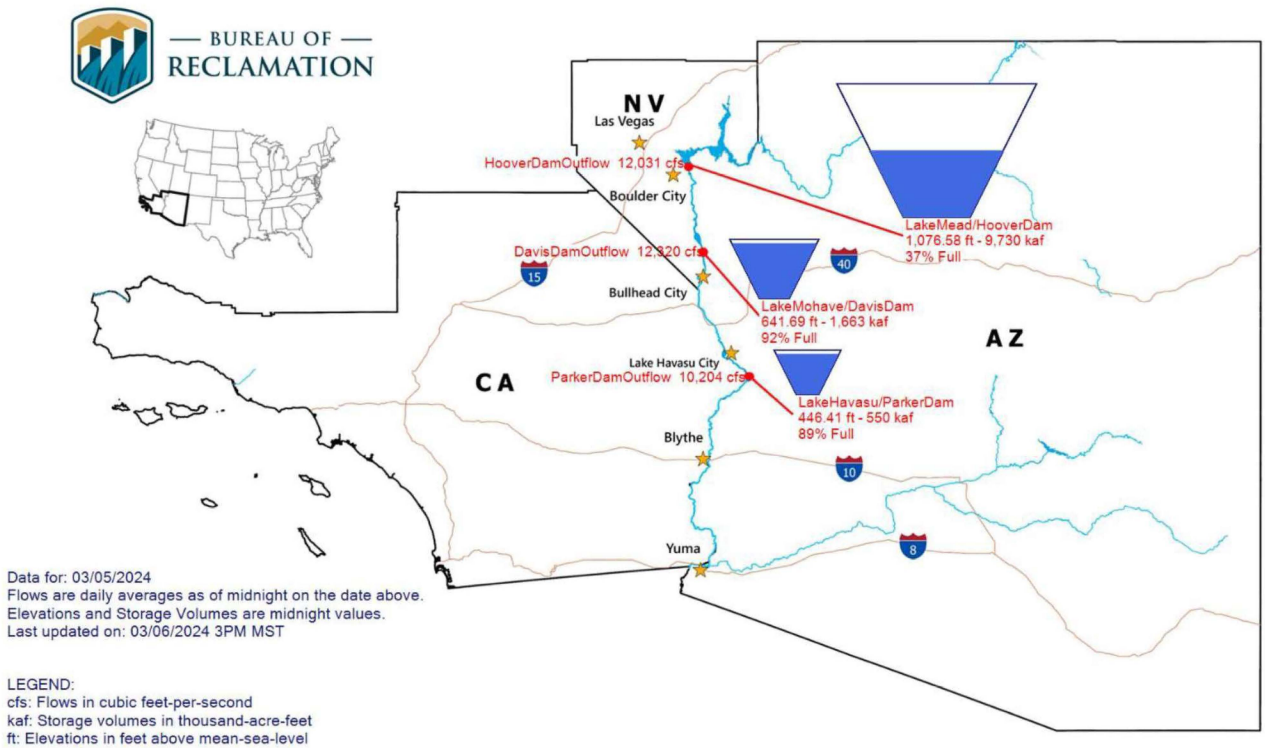
Upper Colorado Region Water Resources Group

River Basin Tea-Cup Diagrams

Data Current as of:
03/05/2024



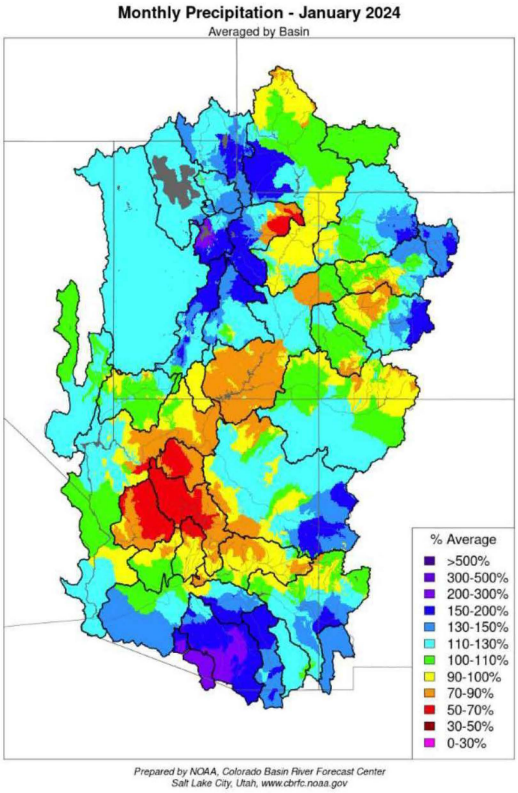
Lower Colorado River Teacup Diagram

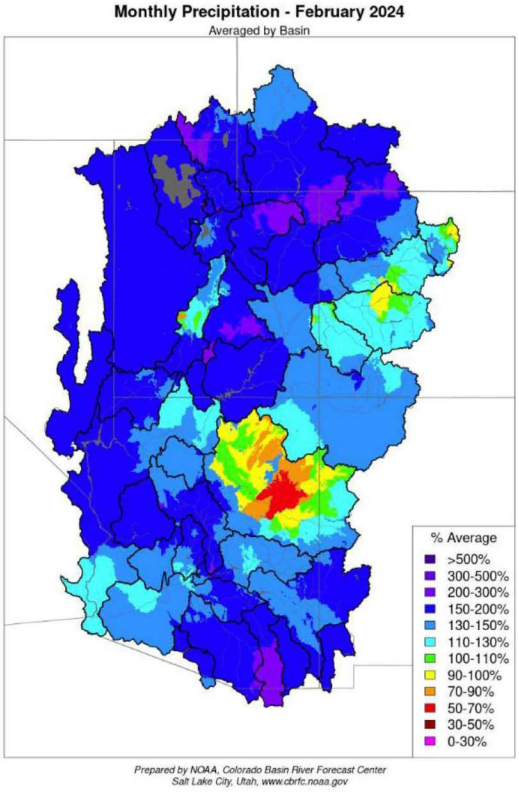


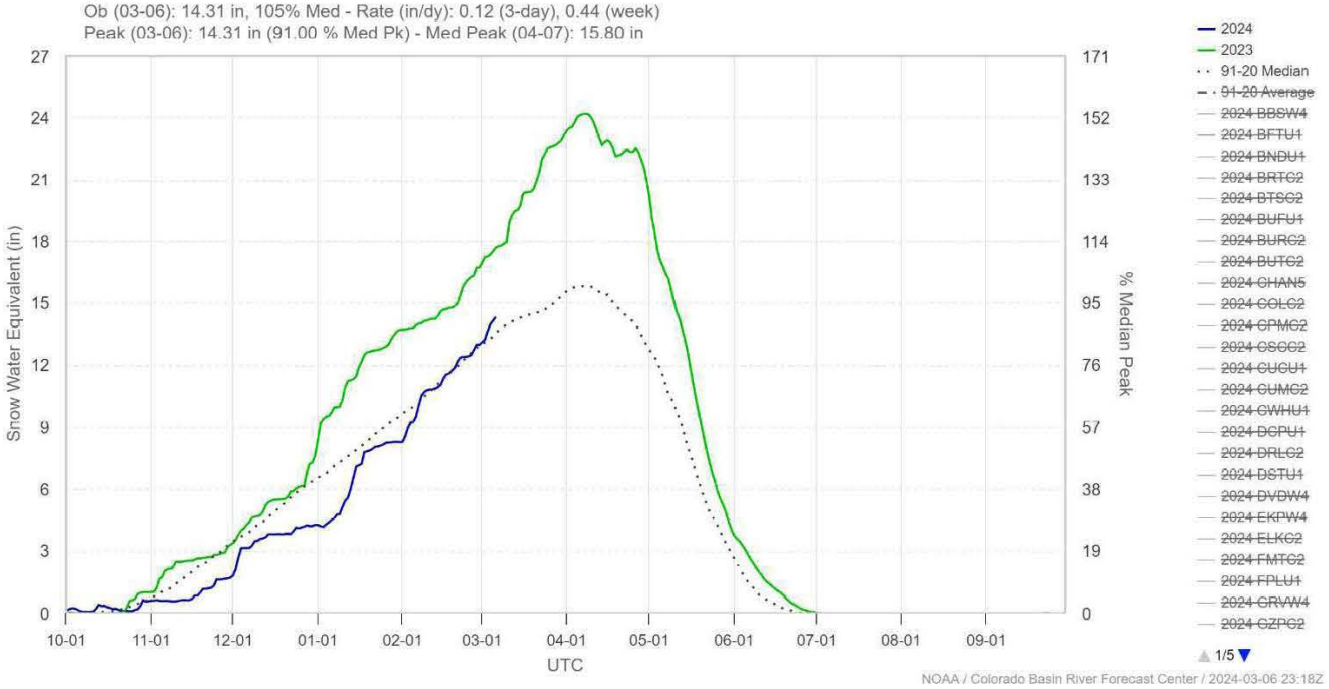
Data for: 03/05/2024
Flows are daily averages as of midnight on the date above.
Elevations and Storage Volumes are midnight values.
Last updated on: 03/06/2024 3PM MST

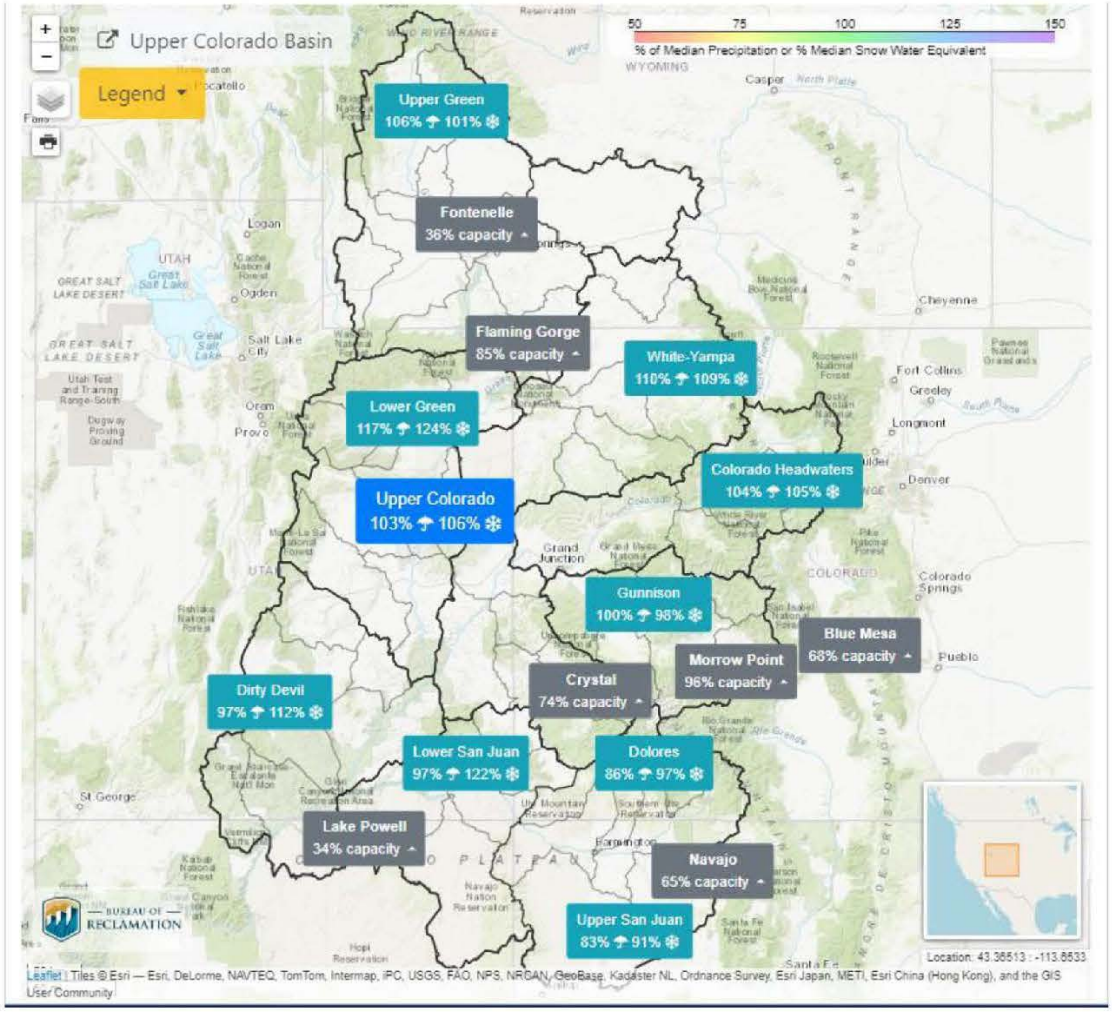
LEGEND:
cfs: Flows in cubic feet-per-second
kaf: Storage volumes in thousand-acre-feet
ft: Elevations in feet above mean-sea-level

NOAA National Weather Service Monthly Precipitation Map January and February 2024



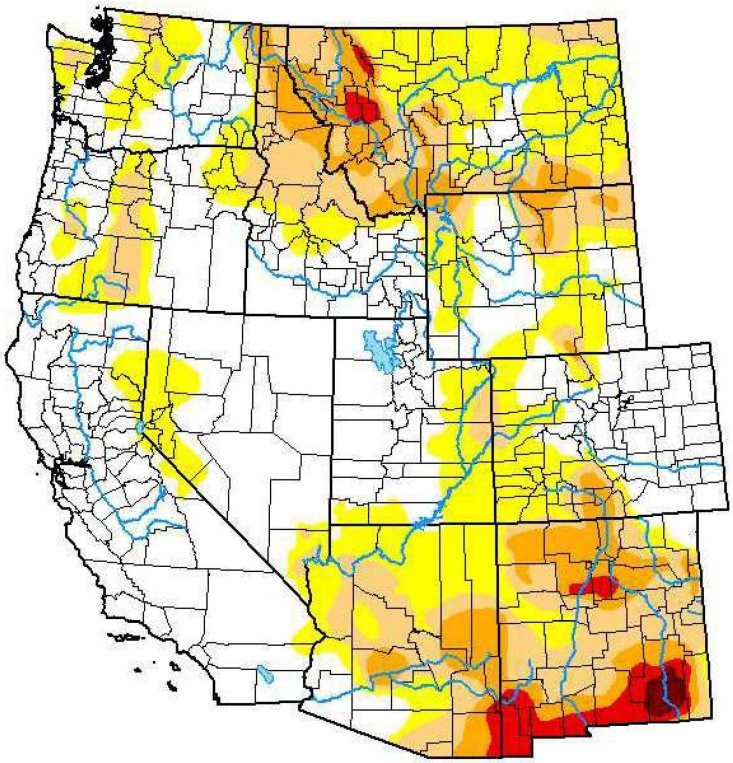



Lake Powell - longrecord - Group SNOTEL Plot
70 sites
Ob (03-06): 14.31 in, 105% Med - Rate (in/dy): 0.12 (3-day), 0.44 (week)
Peak (03-06): 14.31 in (91.00 % Med Pk) - Med Peak (04-07): 15.80 in
Snow Water Equivalent (in)
% Median Peak
UTC
10-01
11-01
12-01
01-01
02-01
03-01
04-01
05-01
06-01
07-01
08-01
09-01
2024
2023
91-20 Median
91-20 Average
1/5
NOAA / Colorado Basin River Forecast Center / 2024-03-06 23:18Z


Upper Colorado Basin
Legend
% of Median Precipitation or % Median Snow Water Equivalent
Upper Green
106% 101%
Fontenelle
36% capacity
Flaming Gorge
85% capacity
White-Yampa
110% 109%
Lower Green
117% 124%
Colorado Headwaters
104% 105%
Upper Colorado
103% 106%
Gunnison
100% 98%
Blue Mesa
68% capacity
Morrow Point
96% capacity
Crystal
74% capacity
Dirty Devil
97% 112%
Lower San Juan
97% 122%
Dolores
86% 97%
Lake Powell
34% capacity
Navajo
65% capacity
Upper San Juan
83% 91%
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Location: 43.36513 : -113.6533
Leaflet | Tiles © Esri — Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, iPC, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), and the GIS User Community

USDA United States Drought Monitor Map

U.S. Drought Monitor
West



February 27, 2024
(Released Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	48.18	51.82	27.14	11.26	2.45	0.36
Last Week *02-20-2024*	49.39	50.61	26.17	10.88	2.32	0.36
3 Months Ago *11-28-2023*	54.87	45.13	27.59	16.29	5.22	0.66
Start of Calendar Year *01-02-2024*	51.19	48.81	25.08	13.17	4.67	0.66
Start of Water Year *09-26-2023*	55.99	44.01	31.24	17.70	6.09	0.70
One Year Ago *02-28-2023*	24.28	75.72	53.55	22.35	3.09	0.15

Intensity:

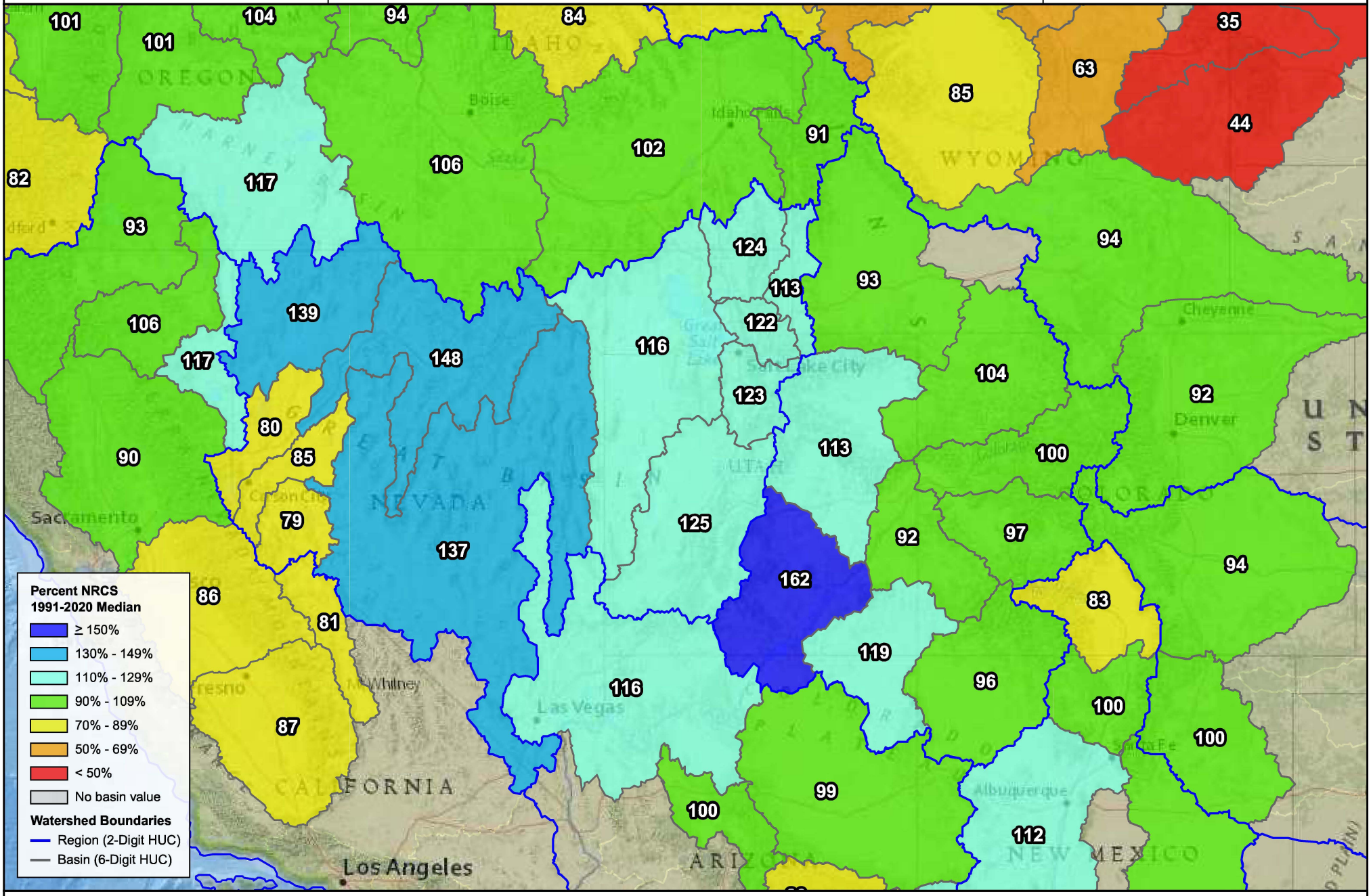
- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx

Author:
Richard Heim
NCEI/NOAA

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

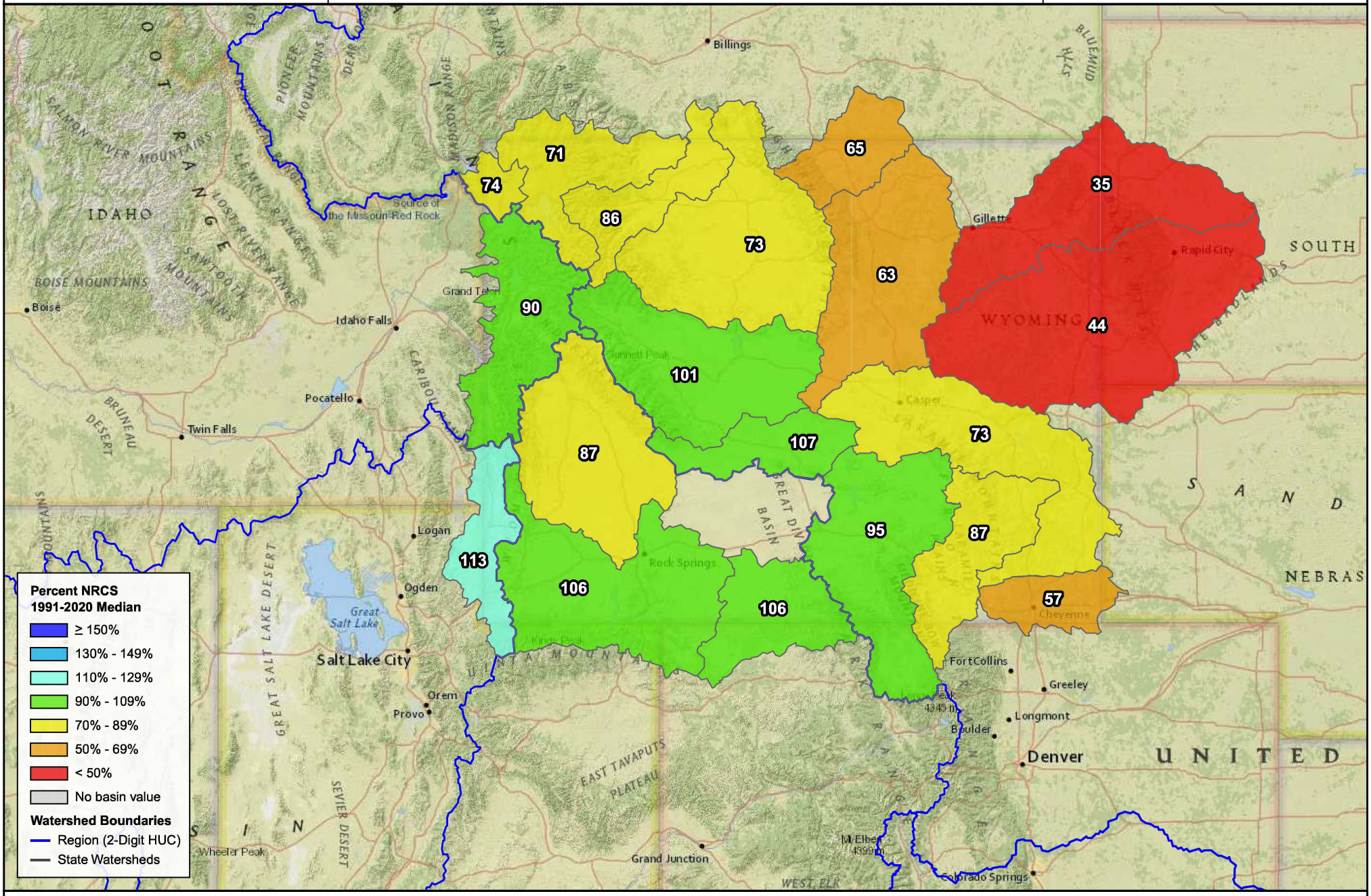
Snow Water Equivalent	Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median	March 1st, 2024



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

Created 3-06-2024

Snow Water Equivalent	Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median	March 1st, 2024



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

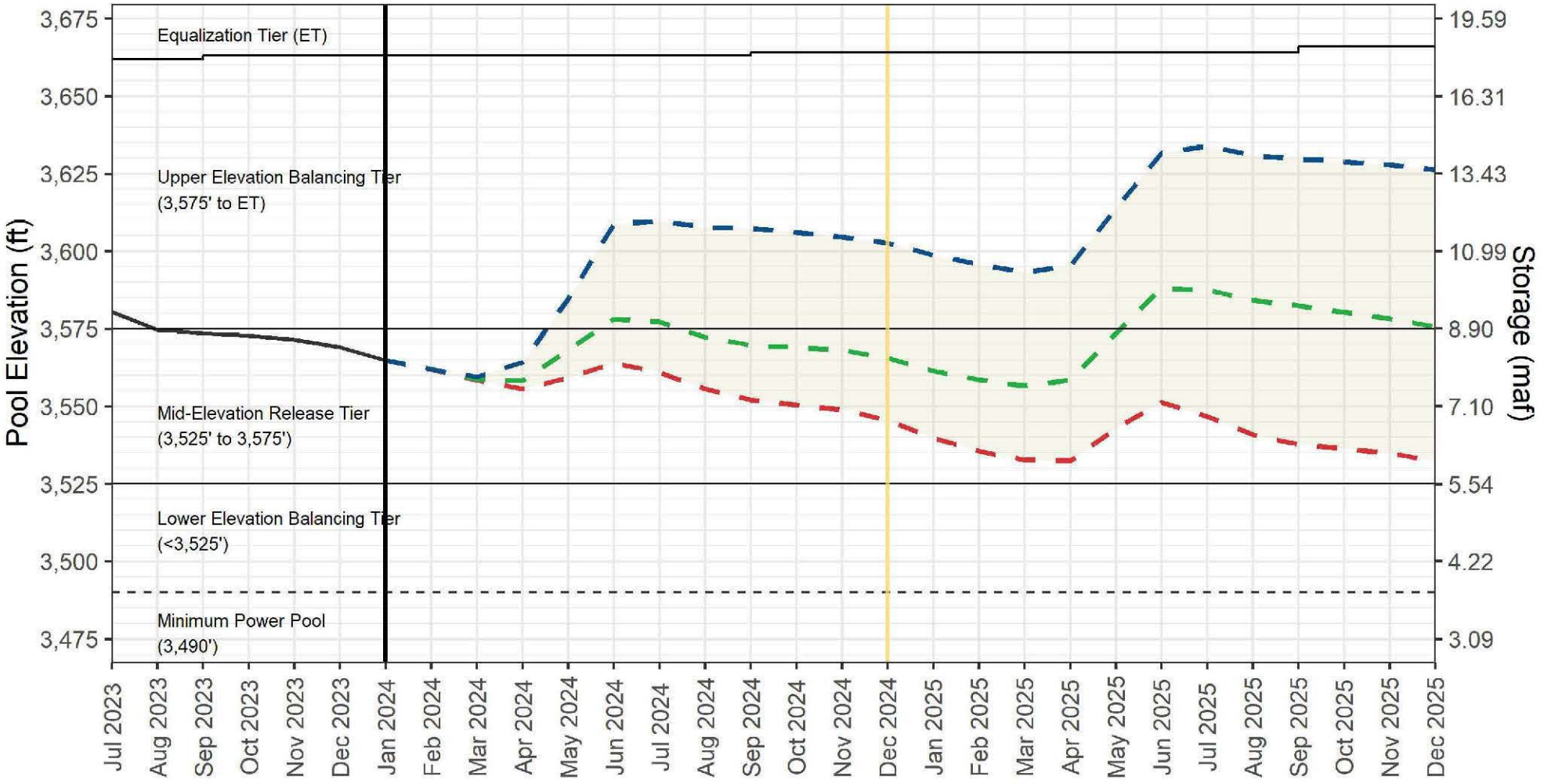
N

0 20 40 80 120 160 200 Miles

Created 3-06-2024

Lake Powell End-of-Month Elevations

Projections from January and February 2024 24-Month Study Inflow Scenarios



Historical Elevations

January 2024 Probable Maximum Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and 9.00 maf in WY 2025

February 2024 Most Probable Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025

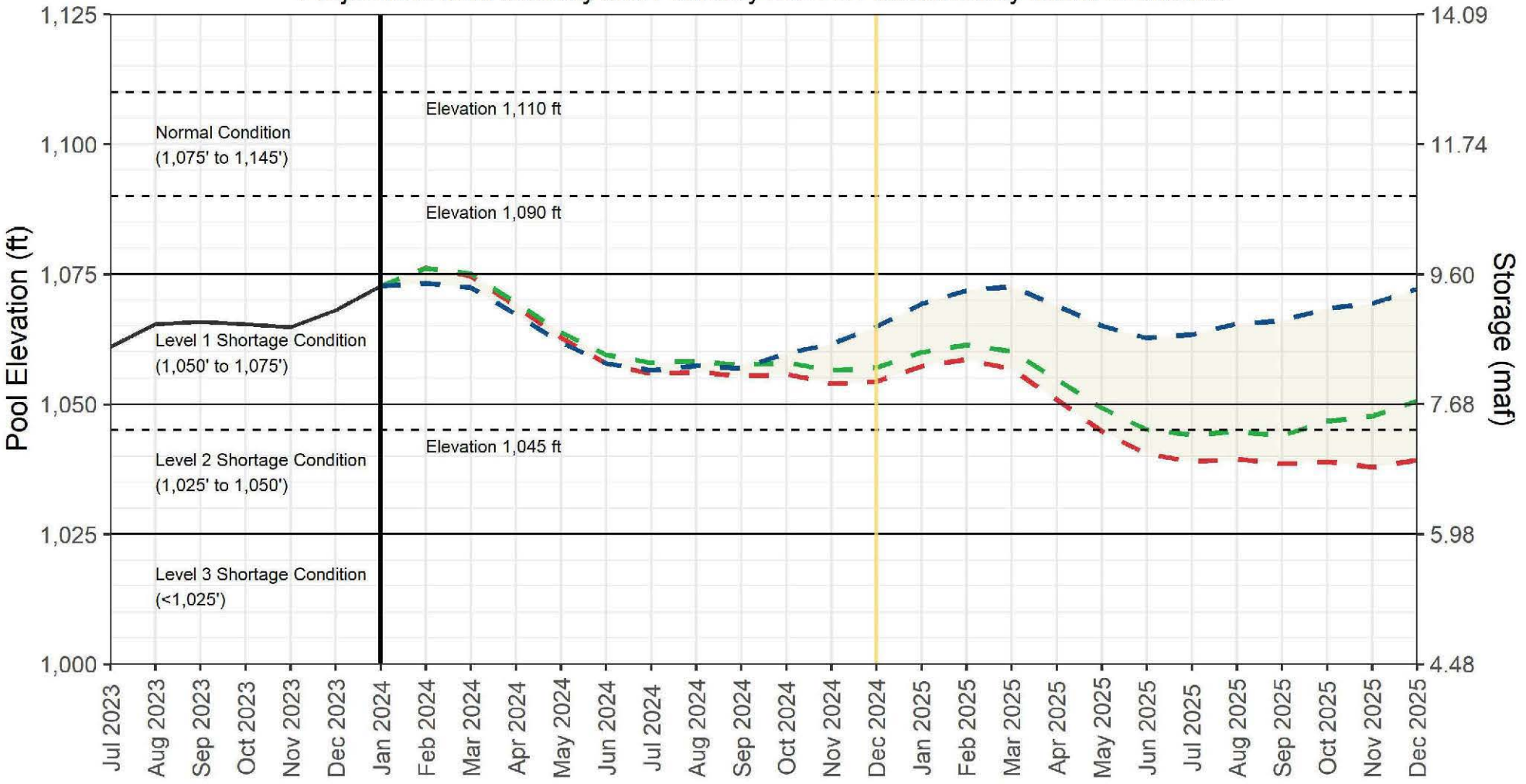
February 2024 DROA Probable Minimum Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025

The Drought Response Operations Agreement (DROA) is available online at https://www.usbr.gov/dcp/finaldocs.html.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lake Mead End-of-Month Elevations

Projections from January and February 2024 24-Month Study Inflow Scenarios



Historical Elevations

January 2024 Probable Maximum Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and 9.00 maf in WY 2025

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BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Precipitation Statistics (period of record: 1981-current)

Statewide as of 03/03/2024

Water Year to Date: **18.05"**

% of Average: **108%**

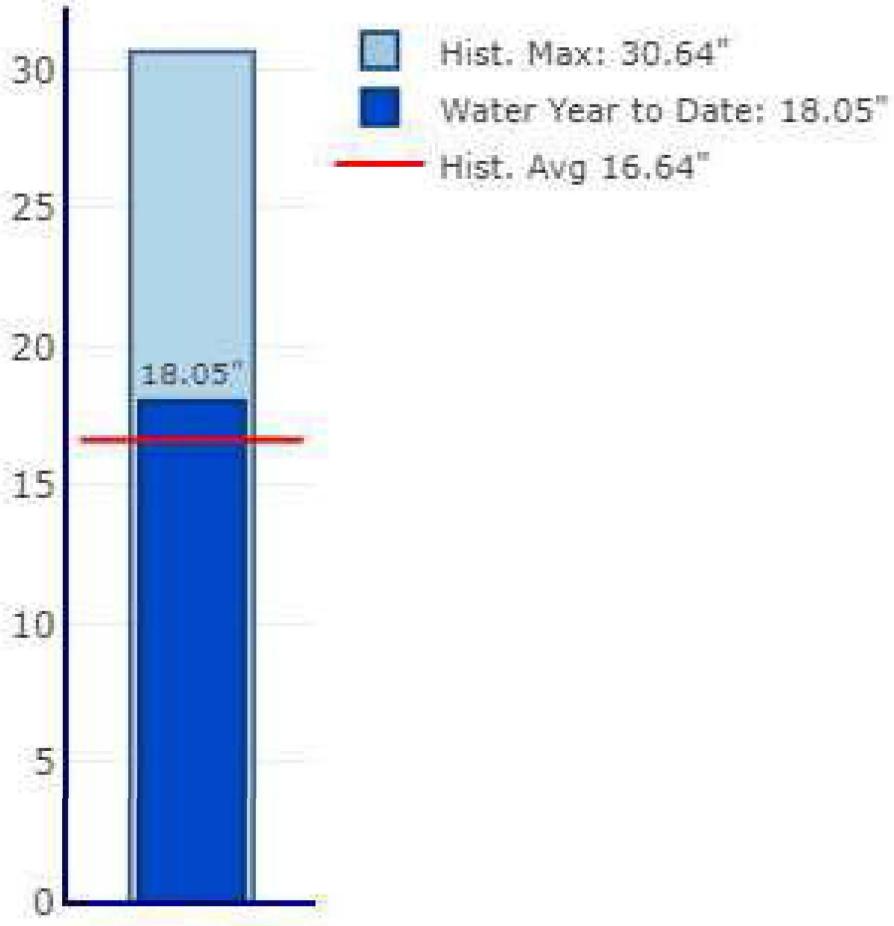
Precipitation % of average for full water year through September 30th: **76%**

Historical Record to Date:

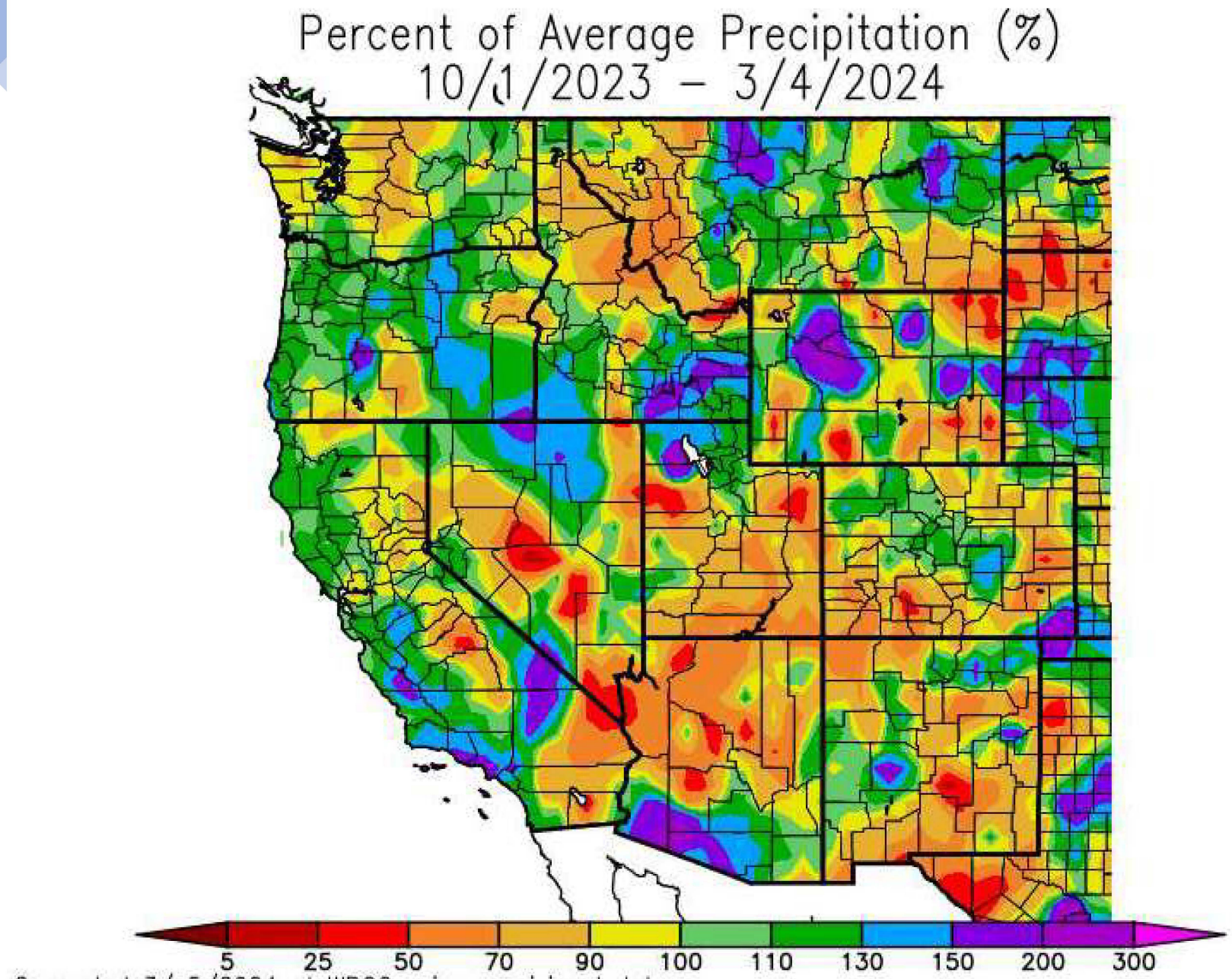
Max: **30.64"**

Mean: **16.64"**

Min: **7.44"**



Precipitation for water year to date is 108% of historical average

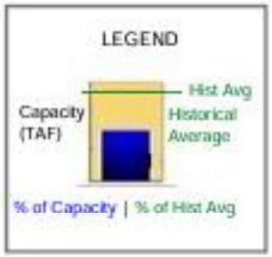

Percent of Average Precipitation (%)
10/1/2023 – 3/4/2024
5
25
50
70
90
100
110
130
150
200
300
Generated 3/ 5/2024 at WRCC using provisional data.
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

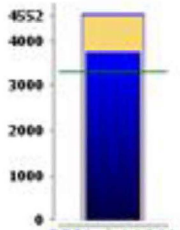
CURRENT RESERVOIR CONDITIONS

CALIFORNIA MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS

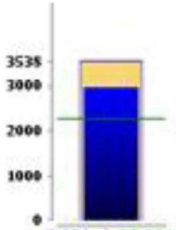
CURRENT CONDITIONS

Midnight - March 4, 2024

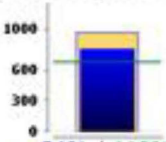




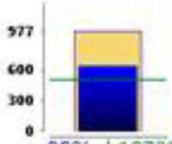
82% | 113%
Shasta



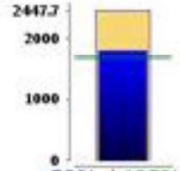
84% | 131%
Oroville



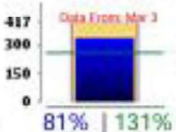
84% | 118%
New Bullards Bar



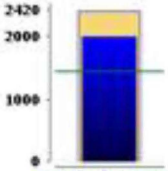
66% | 127%
Folsom



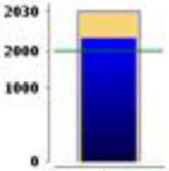
73% | 107%
Trinity



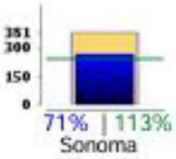
81% | 131%
Camanche



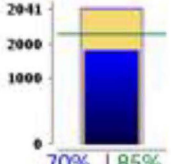
83% | 138%
New Melones



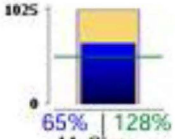
83% | 112%
Don Pedro



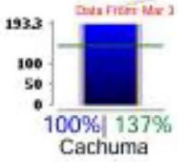
71% | 113%
Sonoma



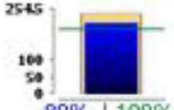
70% | 85%
San Luis



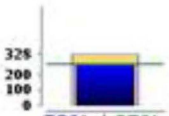
65% | 128%
McClure



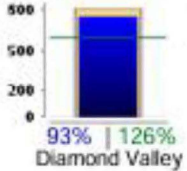
100% | 137%
Cachuma



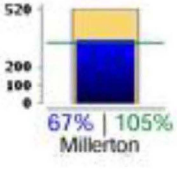
89% | 109%
Casitas



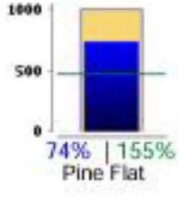
79% | 97%
Castaic



93% | 126%
Diamond Valley



67% | 105%
Millerton



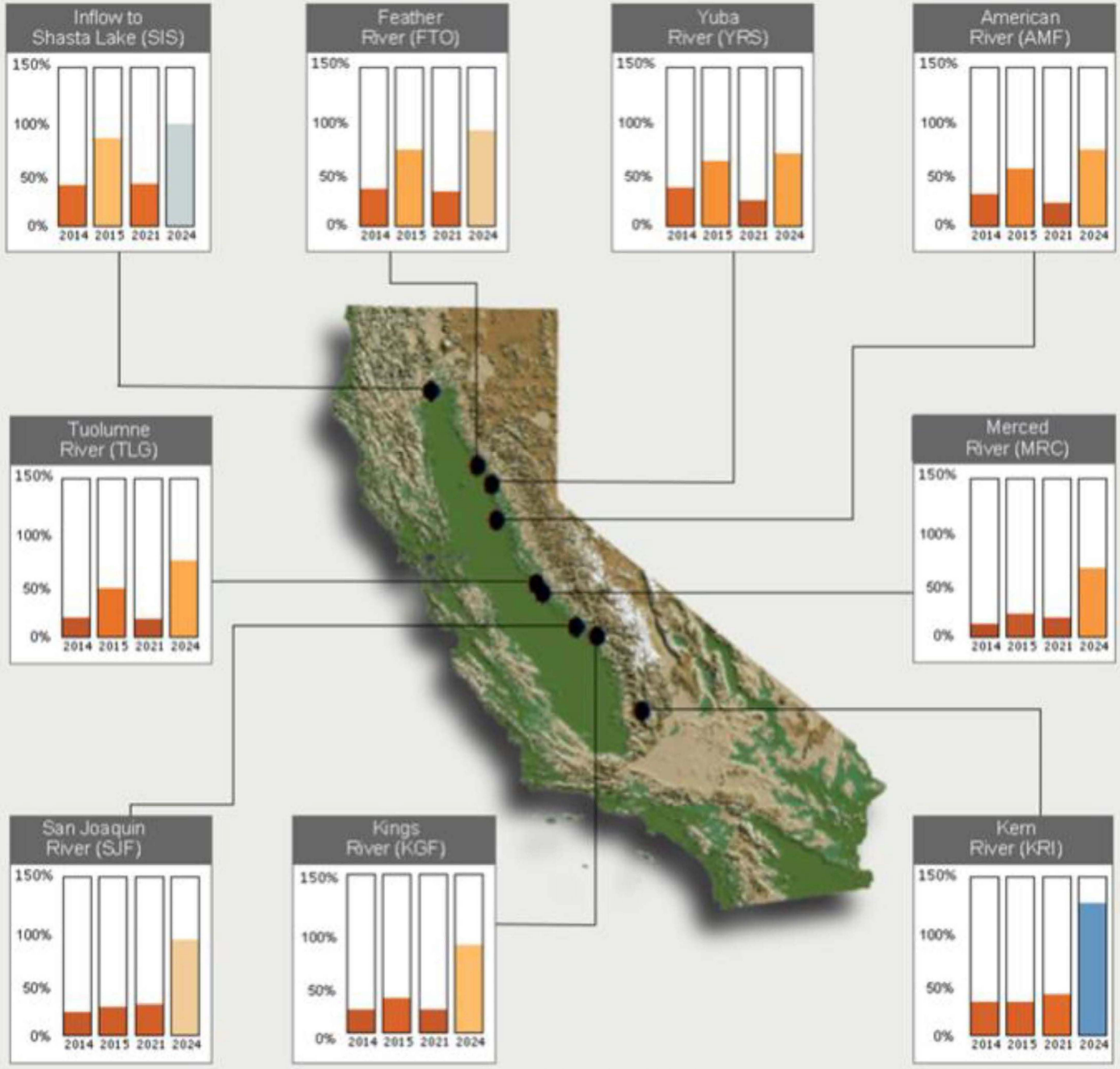
74% | 155%
Pine Flat

Updated 03/05/2024 09:48 AM

Full Natural Flow at DWR Forecast Points on Selected California Rivers

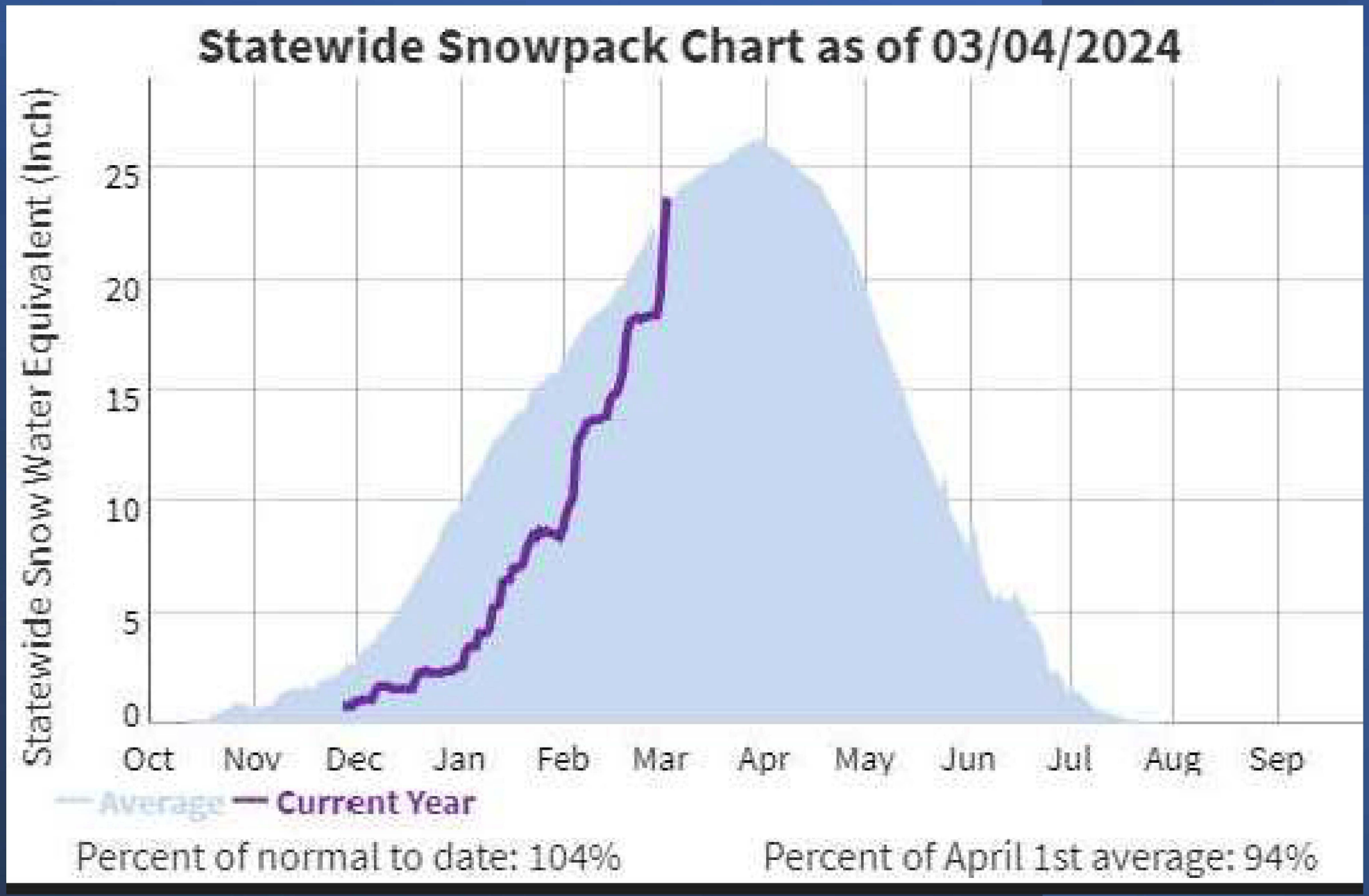
Shown as a Percent of Average to Date

Data as of Midnight: 04-Mar-2024



(XYZ) = CDEC Station ID

Date Created: 03/05/2024


Statewide Snowpack Chart as of 03/04/2024
Statewide Snow Water Equivalent (Inch)
25
20
15
10
5
0
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Average
Current Year
Percent of normal to date: 104%
Percent of April 1st average: 94%

STATEWIDE SNOW WATER CONTENT

CURRENT REGIONAL SNOWPACK FROM AUTOMATED SNOW SENSORS

% of April 1 Average / % of Normal for This Date

NORTH	
Data as of March 4, 2024	
Number of Stations Reporting	25
Average snow water equivalent (Inches)	29.1
Percent of April 1 Average (%)	101
Percent of normal for this date (%)	111

CENTRAL	
Data as of March 4, 2024	
Number of Stations Reporting	49
Average snow water equivalent (Inches)	25.1
Percent of April 1 Average (%)	94
Percent of normal for this date (%)	104

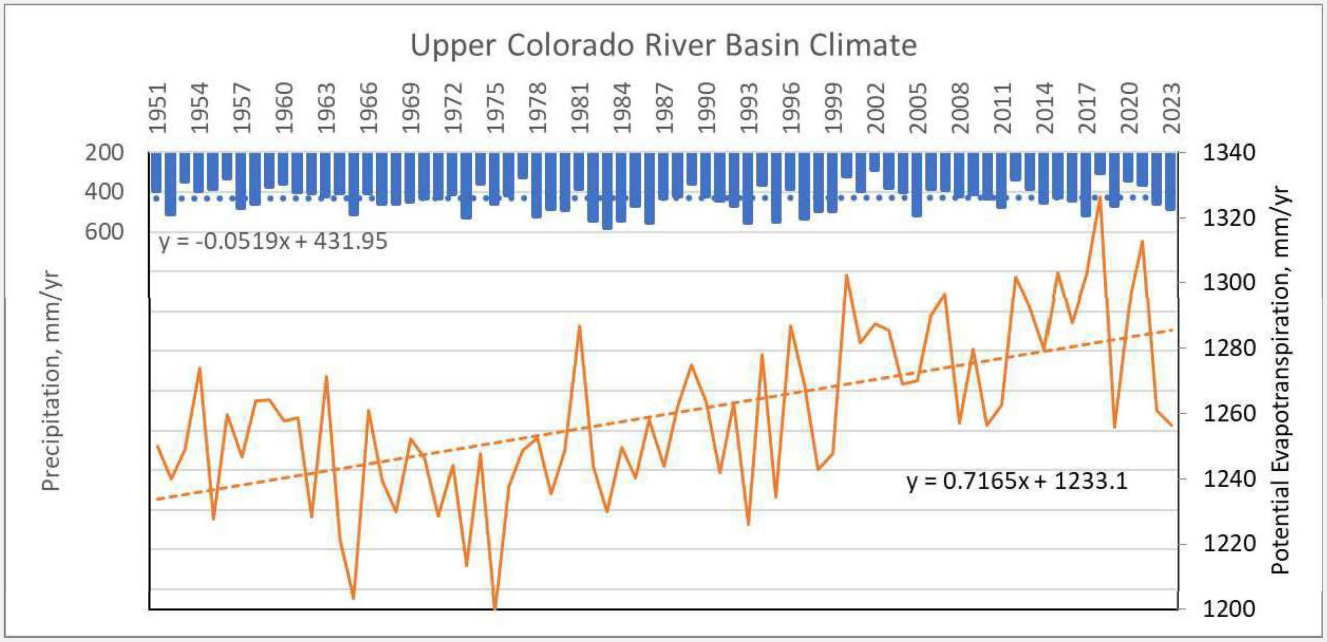
SOUTH	
Data as of March 4, 2024	
Number of Stations Reporting	27
Average snow water equivalent (Inches)	18.9
Percent of April 1 Average (%)	86
Percent of normal for this date (%)	94

STATE	
Data as of March 4, 2024	
Number of Stations Reporting	101
Average snow water equivalent (Inches)	24.4
Percent of April 1 Average (%)	94
Percent of normal for this date (%)	104

Statewide Average: 94% / 104%

Upper Colorado River Basin

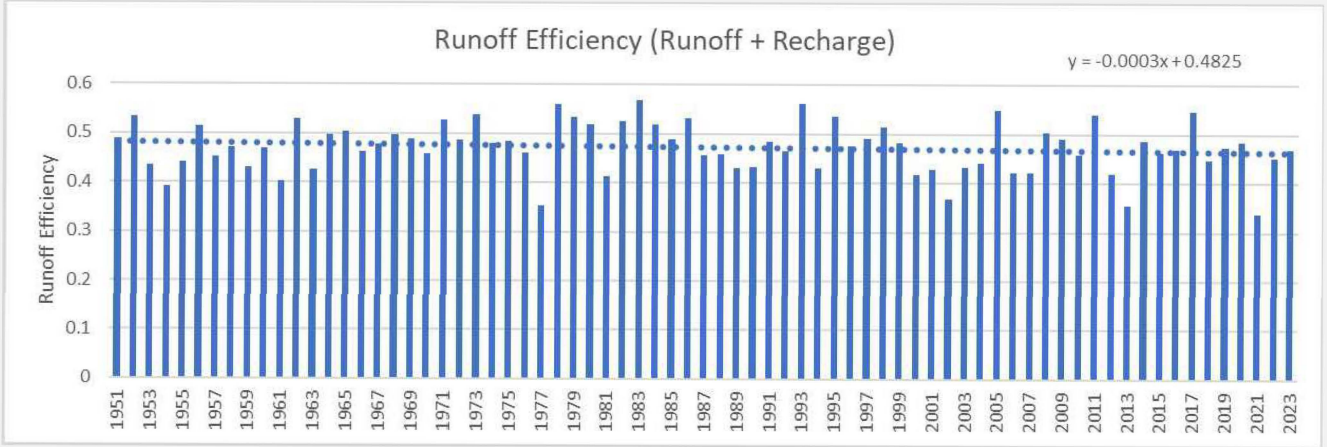
Slightly Declining Precipitation and Rising Evaporative Demand

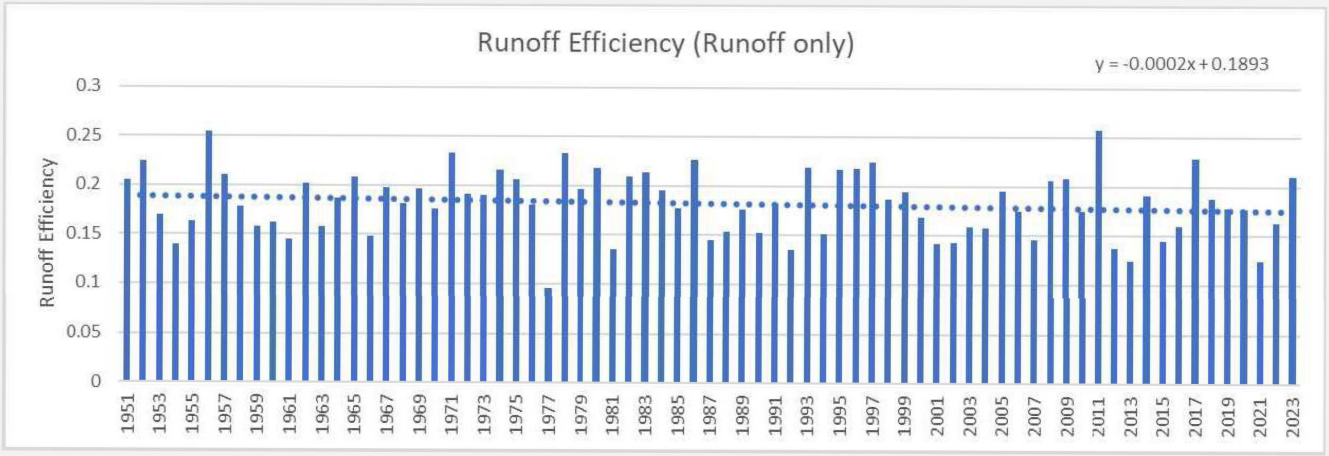


EarthKnowledge
INTEGRATED PLANETARY INTELLIGENCE

Upper Colorado River Basin

Runoff Efficiency





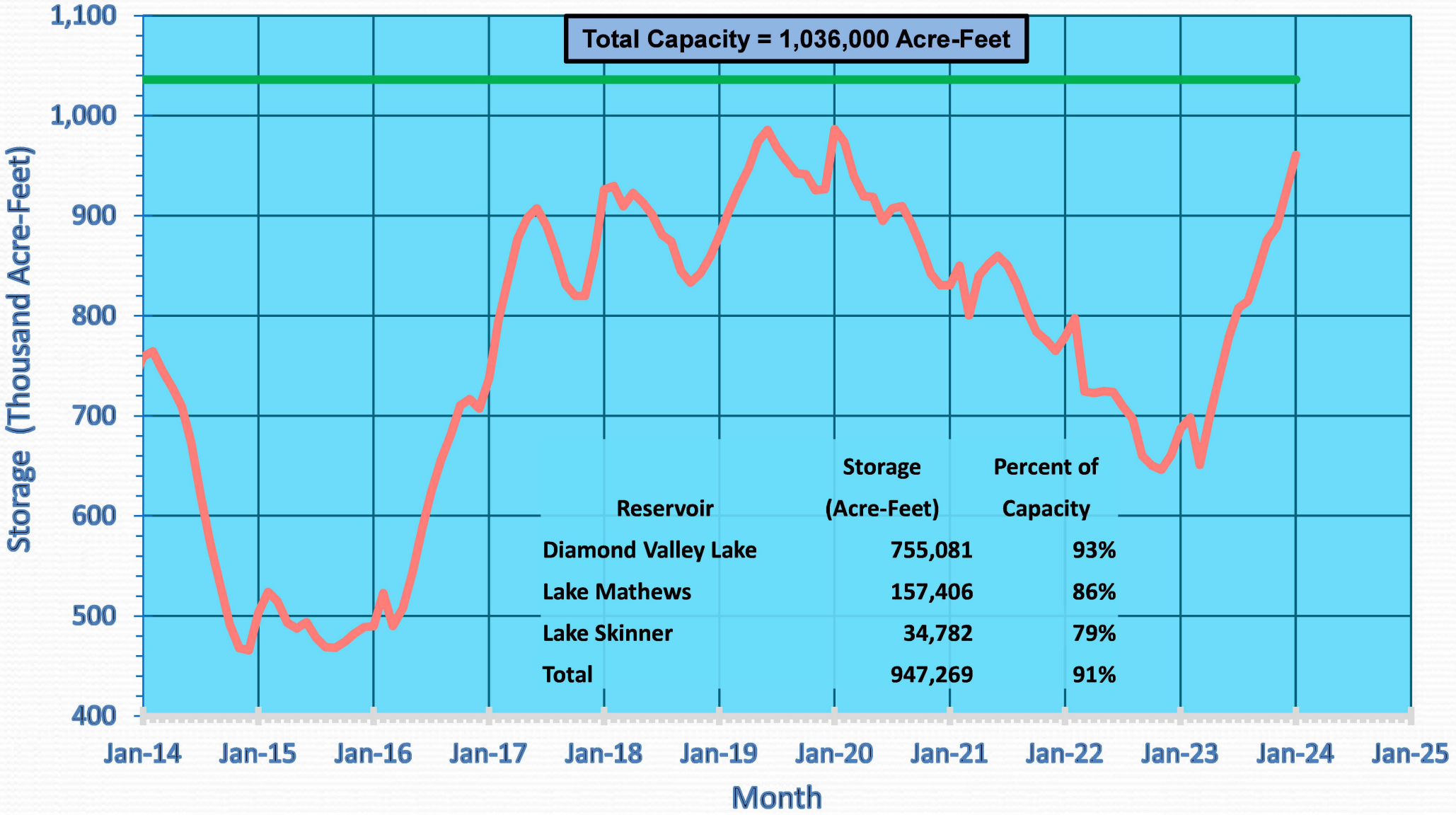
Calculated 2 ways

- Runoff is the water that ends up in the stream during and just after precipitation events
- Recharge moves to the streams later as baseflow and sustains streamflow through the dry season
- In droughts some of the recharge may recharge the unsaturated zone

EarthKnowledge
INTEGRATED PLANETARY INTELLIGENCE

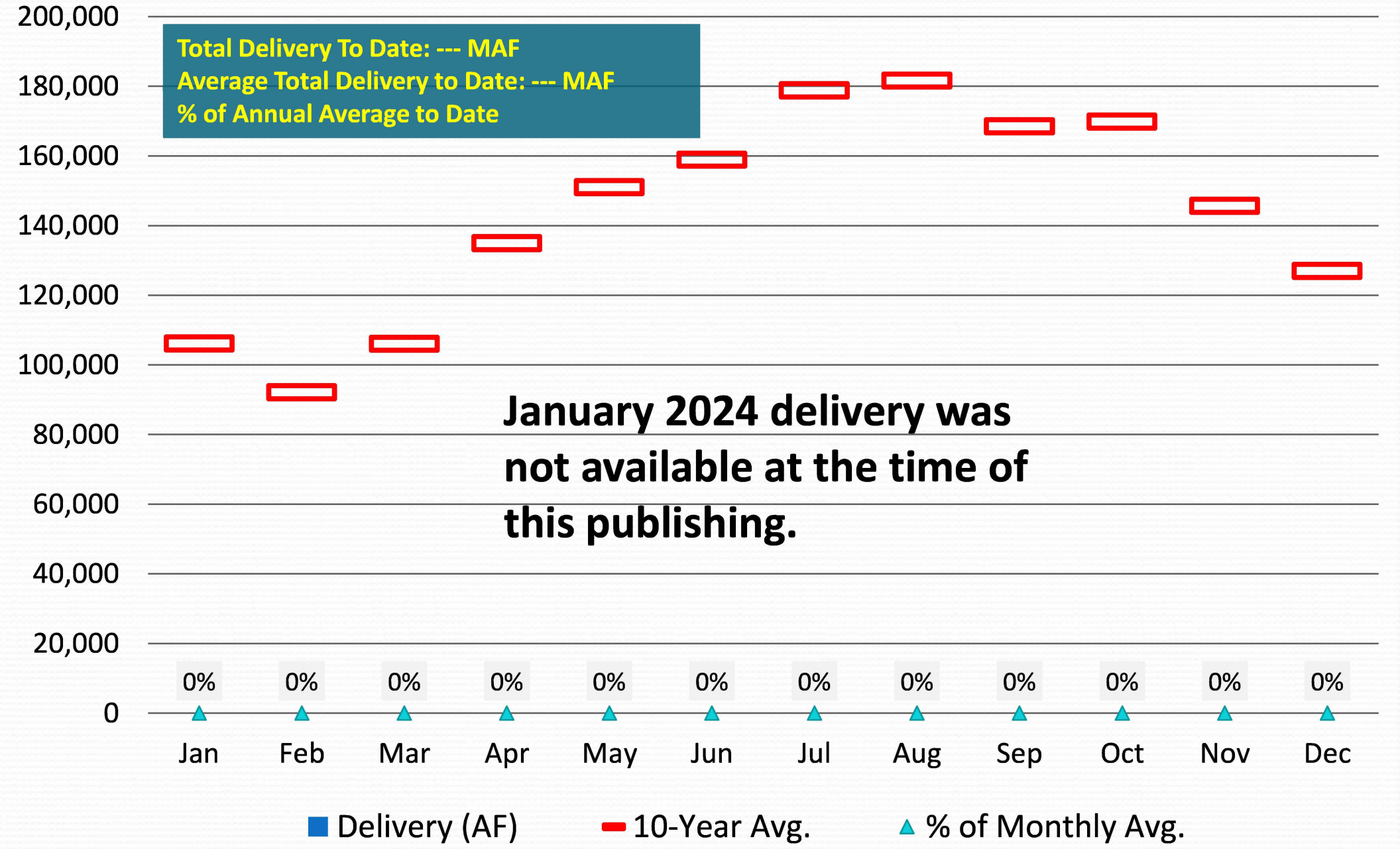
MWD's Combined Reservoir Storage as of March 1, 2024

Lake Skinner, Lake Mathews, and Diamond Valley Lake

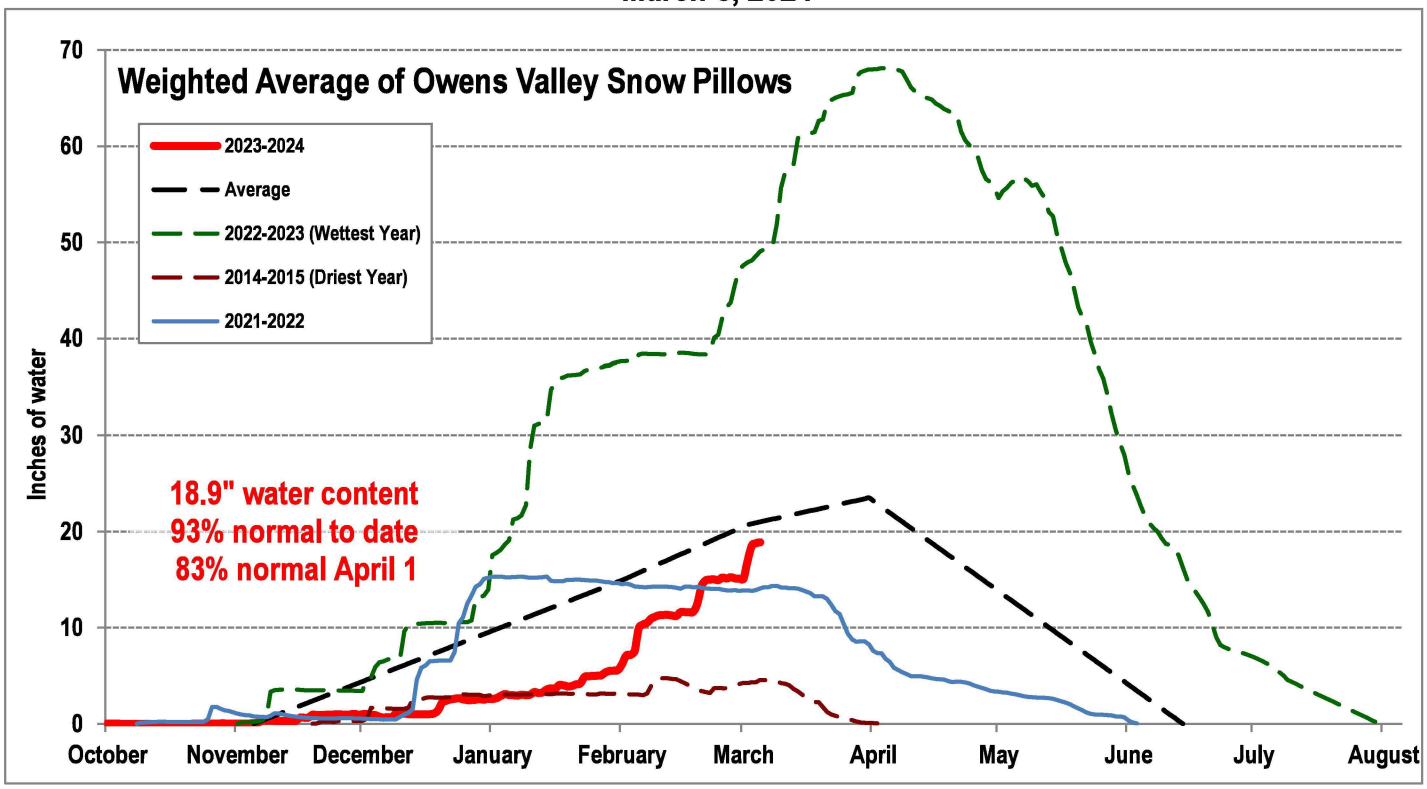


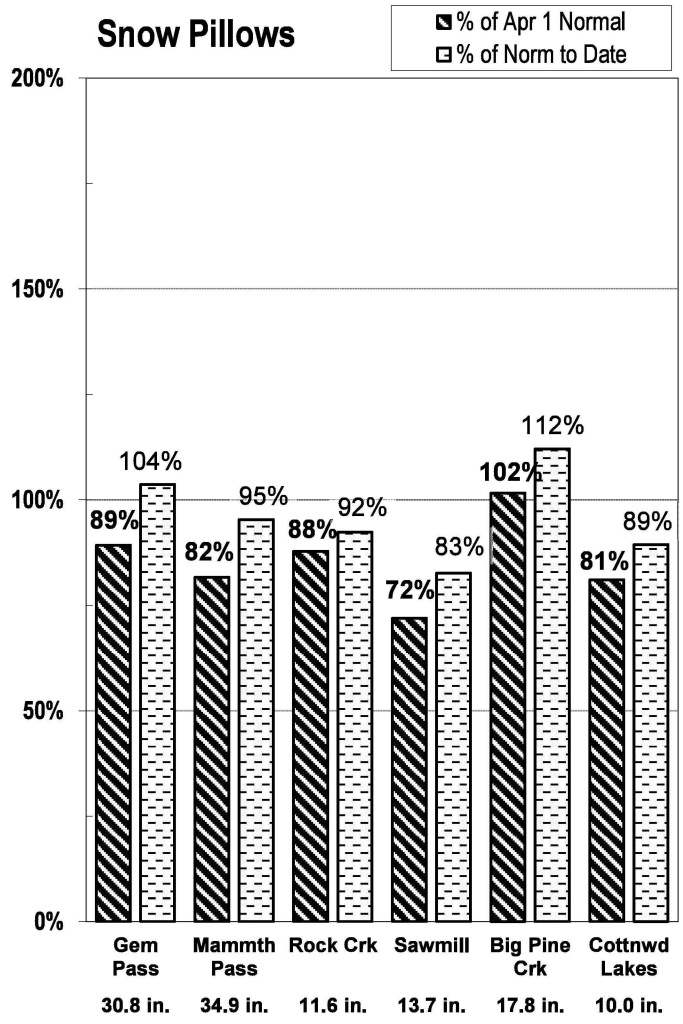
Reservoir	Storage (Acre-Feet)	Percent of Capacity
Diamond Valley Lake	755,081	93%
Lake Mathews	157,406	86%
Lake Skinner	34,782	79%
Total	947,269	91%

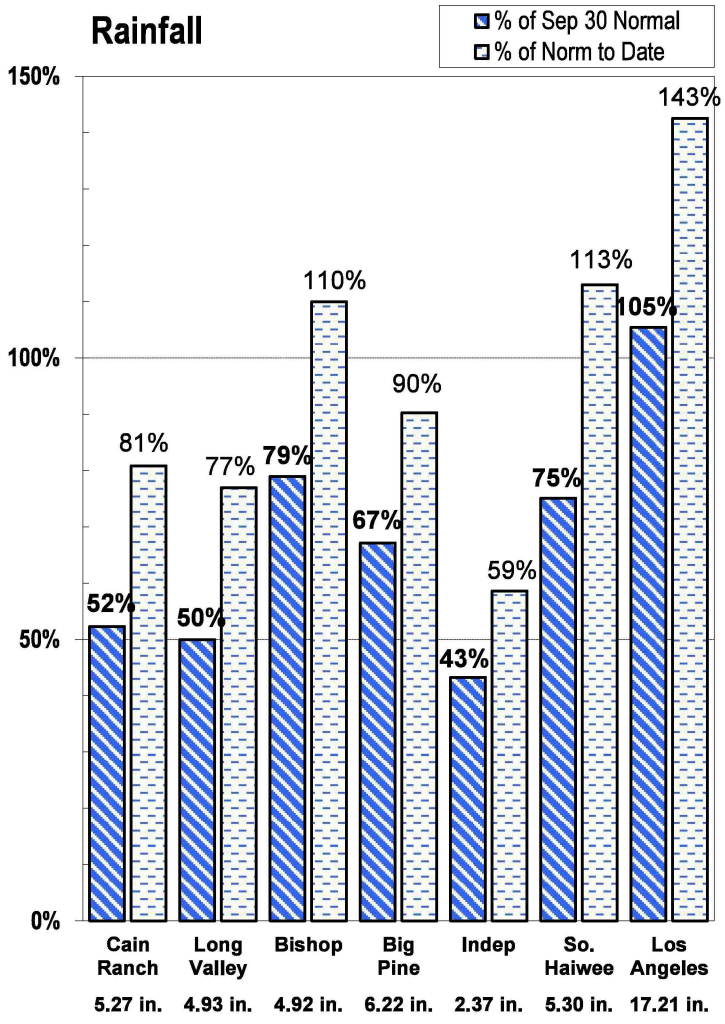
2024 Water Deliveries to Agencies (AF)



EASTERN SIERRA
CURRENT PRECIPITATION CONDITIONS
March 5, 2024







Measurement as Inches Water Content; Precipitation totals are cumulative for water year beginning Oct 1

For Immediate Release **Contacts:** *See below*
March 5, 2024

Arizona, California, Nevada issue statement on release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Near-Term Colorado River Operations

The governors' representatives of the three Lower Colorado River Basin States – **Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Tom Buschatzke, Colorado River Commissioner for California JB Hamby, and Southern Nevada Water Authority General Manager John Entsminger** – jointly issue the following statement regarding the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's release today of the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Near-Term Colorado River Operations*. The Final SEIS features as the preferred alternative the states' May 2023 Lower Basin Plan to conserve 3 million acre-feet of Colorado River water by 2026, beyond reductions previously agreed to under the Interim Shortage Guidelines and the Drought Contingency Plan.

The Lower Basin States statement:
"The plan for additional near-term water use reductions released today provides the stability we need to fully focus on long-term solutions to challenges ahead on the Colorado River. We are grateful to our federal partners at the Bureau of Reclamation for recognizing that the consensus approach proposed by the Lower Basin States last year for these near-term operations is the best way to protect the Colorado River system through 2026."

"That spirit of cooperation continues to guide us as we work to resolve the even greater challenge ahead – planning the river's long-term sustainability. As we negotiate the next set of guidelines for Colorado River operations after 2026, the success of these water conservation commitments reminds us that only by working together, each making sacrifices, will we see real results."

"In 2023, Arizona, California and Nevada already took a significant step toward fulfilling our conservation commitment through 2026 made under the Lower Basin Plan – together conserving more than 1.1 million acre-feet of water that has been left in Lake Mead, in addition to more than 600,000 acre-feet contributed under previous commitments. Our use of Colorado River water last year was the lowest since 1983. This accomplishment was achieved not through litigation, but through collective recognition that the river's health is the responsibility of everyone who relies on it."

For further information, contact:
Arizona Department of Water Resources: Doug MacEachern, 602-510-0104
Colorado River Board of California: Jessica Neuwerth, 818-254-3202
Southern Nevada Water Authority: Bronson Mack, 702-822-8543

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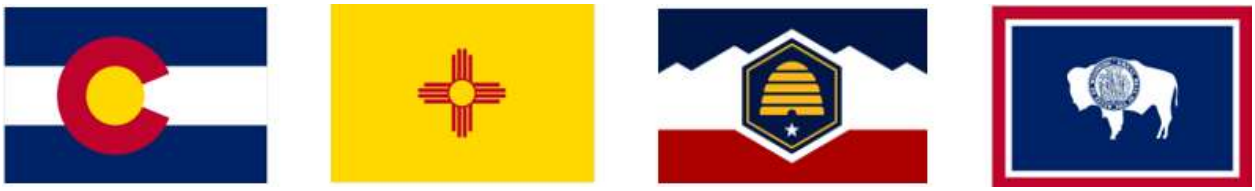


Colorado River Upper Division State Representatives of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming

MEDIA RELEASE
March 5, 2024

Upper Division Colorado River States Propose Alternative for Sustainable Operations of Post-2026 Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead

This week, the Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation an Alternative for Post-2026 Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The UDS Alternative proposes operations for Lake Powel and Lake Mead designed to help provide water supply certainty and sustainability in the face of a drying and uncertain future.

The purpose of the Upper Division States Alternative is to provide a set of modeling assumptions and operating parameters to the Bureau of Reclamation for Post-2026 Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead as part of the review process required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Separate from this NEPA process, the Upper Division States (UDS) will also pursue Parallel Activities. Parallel Activities are other activities the Upper Division States might take under certain conditions. Examples include potential releases and recovery at the Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSPA) Initial Units and voluntary water conservation programs that would help to protect the ability of Lake Powell to make releases.

The Upper Division States Alternative provides:

- Management of the reservoirs to address the existing imbalance between water supply and demands in the Lower Basin;
- Operations based on actual conditions—instead of unreliable forecasts—to ensure that Lake Powell and Lake Mead are operated sustainably;
- Efforts to rebuild storage at Lake Powell to protect the reservoir's ability to provide water to Lake Mead;
- Reliance on the best available science and information, including impacts caused by climate change;
- Consistency with the Law of the River;

- Accounting of Upper Basin's hydrologic shortages, which average an estimated 1.2 million acre-feet each year; and
- Acknowledgement of the settled but undeveloped Tribal water rights in the Upper Basin.

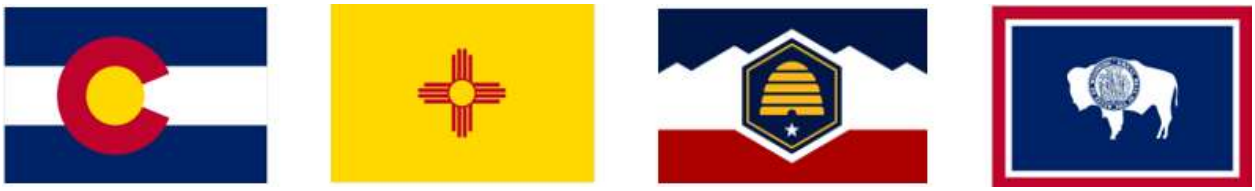
"We can no longer accept the status quo of Colorado River operations," said Becky Mitchell, Colorado's Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission. "If we want to protect the system and ensure certainty for the 40 million people who rely on this water source, then we need to address the existing imbalance between supply and demand. That means using the best available science to work within reality and the actual conditions of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. We must plan for the river we have - not the river we dream for."

Estevan Lopez, New Mexico's Commissioner, said, "The Colorado River Basin is at a critical juncture. The UDS Alternative seeks to acknowledge the Upper Basin's realities, including hydrologic shortages, protect Upper Basin interests, and contribute towards future sustainability of the entire basin. We look forward to working with our sister Lower Basin States to resolve differences in approach and create a 7-state consensus alternative."

"This is a pivotal moment for Utah and the entire Upper Basin," said Gene Shawcroft, Utah's Upper Colorado River Commissioner. "Our proposal represents a balanced approach, combining immediate action with long-term planning to ensure the sustainability of both Lake Powell and Lake Mead. It's about adapting to the realities we face today and securing a water-resilient future for our region."

Wyoming's Commissioner, Brandon Gebhart, said, "Our Alternative focuses on building storage in Lake Powell to help provide a sustainable water supply into the drying future, and avoid the constant crisis of recent years. It's a response to the lessons we've learned, and acknowledges the uncertain future we face. Although our proposal can stand on its own, it was also designed to promote the development of a seven-state consensus alternative which is a goal we all still seek to achieve."

The Upper Division States are committed to working with partners in developing a preferred alternative. The UDS Alternative is available in detail on the Upper Colorado River Commission's website, along with an infographic.



Colorado River Upper Division State Representatives of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming

March 5, 2024

The Honorable Camille Touton
Commissioner
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL
mtouton@usbr.gov
crbpost2026@usbr.gov

Dear Commissioner Touton:

The undersigned Governor Representatives for the Upper Division States (UDS) submit the following Upper Division States' Alternative (UDS Alternative). We request that the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) evaluate the UDS Alternative in conjunction with its June 16, 2023, Notice of Intent to "Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Development of Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead," 88 FR 3945 (Notice), and its October 20, 2023 Notice of Availability for the "Colorado River Reservoir Operations: Development of Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead," 88 FR 72535 (Scoping Summary Report).

We submit this UDS Alternative as a set of modeling assumptions and operating parameters. This is an effective alternative to sustain Lake Powell and Lake Mead into the future. We request that this submittal be considered and evaluated as an alternative for the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines (Post-2026 Operations) NEPA process. This UDS Alternative meets Reclamation's preliminary assessment of the purpose and need described in the Scoping Summary Report and broadly aims to describe the coordinated operation of Lake Powell and Lake Mead in a manner that: (1) Is consistent with the Law of the River; (2) Reduces the risks caused by depleted storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead; (3) Reflects the best available science and information including impacts caused by climate change; (4) Addresses the existing imbalance between water supply and demands in the Basin which depend on storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead; (5) Operates Lake

Powell and Lake Mead based on observed conditions instead of projected conditions; (6) Accounts for hydrologic shortages in the Upper Basin. The UDS also acknowledge settled but undeveloped Tribal water rights in the Upper Basin although those are not specifically described in the UDS Alternative.

Modeling assumptions for the UDS Alternative include the following key parameters for operations at Lakes Powell and Mead:

1) CRSS Model Version. The August release of CRSS v.6 with November 2023 initial conditions has been used to develop the UDS Alternative. This version of CRSS incorporates:
    a. Upper Basin current and future water uses based on the Updated 2016 Upper Division States Depletion Demand Schedule (June 2022) and estimated Upper Basin hydrologic shortages; and
    b. Lower Basin water uses as characterized in the model.

2) Combined Storage Trigger (Trigger). The purpose of the Trigger described in this section is to determine reductions in modeled Lower Basin water use. The UDS Alternative includes a calculation of a Combined Storage Trigger for Lake Powell and Lake Mead on October 1. The Trigger is calculated using Lake Powell and Lake Mead's Storage volume (live storage below flood control elevations) by subtracting a threshold volume from the total live storage. The threshold volume for Lake Powell is 4.2 MAF. The threshold volume for Lake Mead is 4.5 MAF. The threshold volume for the two reservoirs combined is 8.7 MAF. The UDS Alternative does not explicitly protect any reservoir elevations and is agnostic as to how modeled reductions are attributed below Lee Ferry. The calculation of the Trigger is as follows:

$$\frac{Current\ Live\ Storage - Threshold\ Volume}{Total\ Live\ Storage - Threshold\ Volume} \times 100$$

Lake Powell Operations

The UDS Alternative includes the Lake Powell release curve as described in the table below based on observed conditions at the start of the Water Year beginning on October 1.

Lake Powell Elevation (October 1)	Lake Powell Percent Full (live storage)	Lake Powell Water Year Release
> 3,700’	100%	As required by dam safety regulations
3,670’ - 3,700’	81% – 100%	Linear Rule Curve - 8.1 - 9.0 MAFY
3,510’ - 3,670’	20% – 81%	Linear Rule Curve - 6.0 - 8.1 MAFY
< 3,510’	< 20%	6.0 MAFY

Lake Mead Operations

Lake Mead operations are adapted from a concept first proposed by the Lower Division States. The reduction curve described below identifies water use reductions as a function of the Trigger. All reductions are assumed to be applied to Lower Basin mainstem consumptive use of 7.5 MAFY, defined as diversions from the mainstem minus return flows. The operating year reductions are determined based on the October 1 Trigger each year. Based on the Trigger values below, this reduction curve results in the following volumes being unavailable for release from Lake Mead or for delivery in the Lower Basin.

October 1 Trigger	Lower Basin Reductions	Description
> 90%	0 MAFY	No Lower Basin Reductions
90% - 70%	0 – 1.5 MAFY	Lower Basin Reductions linearly increase up to a maximum of 1.5 MAFY
70% - 20%	1.5 MAFY	Lower Basin 1.5 MAFY Reduction remains static
20% - 0%	> 1.5 MAFY	In addition to the static 1.5 MAFY Reductions, Lower Basin Reductions linearly increase up to an additional 2.4 MAFY

No Action Alternative

As of the date of this submittal, Reclamation has not disclosed the No Action Alternative for this EIS. The No Action Alternative must acknowledge that, upon expiration of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the operating criteria for Lake Powell and Lake Mead will revert to the Long-Range Operating Criteria (LROC) used to model baseline conditions in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Interim Surplus Guidelines dated December 2000. However, details regarding potential implementation of the LROC are unclear. We request that the Secretary consult with the Basin States for input on the development of the No Action Alternative.

Term of Post-2026 Operations

The Post-2026 Operations must be interim in duration. In the Notice, Reclamation states that the Post-2026 Operations will be approximately twenty years in duration. However, due to uncertain future hydrologic conditions, and the uncertainty of future actions, the UDS assert that a shorter interim period may be warranted.

Hydrologic Shortages

The water supply available to the UDS is uncertain every year due to hydrologic variability. UDS water users are subject to hydrologic shortages each year which are involuntary reductions in consumptive water use due to the lack of physical and legal availability of water. As the water available is uncertain each year, the volume of water that can be derived from Parallel Activities defined below is limited.

Parallel Activities

In the event that this UDS Alternative is adopted, the UDS will undertake parallel but separate activities ***that are not a part of this federal action or part of the UDS Alternative***. Parallel activities refer to actions in the Upper Basin that are beyond the scope of the Post-2026 Operations, but may complement those operations.

The UDS will take additional actions to help preserve the ability to release water from Lake Powell including potential releases of water from CRSPA Upstream Initial Units (Flaming Gorge, Aspinall, Navajo). Any releases from the CRSPA Upstream Initial Units to help maintain Lake Powell releases must occur within existing authorities, will take place outside of this NEPA process and will be subject to separate criteria.

The UDS will also pursue voluntary, temporary, and compensated reductions of consumptive use. Conserved volumes will vary based on multiple factors, including hydrologic conditions. Temporary conservation would occur without impairing the right to exercise existing water rights. Conserved water would be credited to, and be available for, the benefit of the UDS, including helping to maintain Lake Powell releases under certain conditions. These activities may also provide benefits for environmental resources.

Continued Collaboration

Since Reclamation issued the Notice on June 16, 2023, the seven Basin States have consulted among themselves and with Reclamation to explore potential Post-2026 Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead, together with potential parallel activities. The UDS have also engaged with Upper Basin Tribes, water users, and non-governmental organizations on these topics. While we are submitting this UDS Alternative as four states, we recognize the value of Basin-wide collaboration in order to achieve the flexibility and innovation needed in the face of an uncertain

future. Accordingly, we welcome future opportunities to explore a seven-state consensus alternative.

Reservation of Rights

Operations proposed under this UDS Alternative do not represent interpretations of existing law by the undersigned. The UDS expressly reserve their rights under applicable law, including, but not limited to the Law of the River. Nothing in this submittal is intended, nor shall be construed, to interpret, diminish, or modify the rights of the UDS or the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC) under federal or state law or administrative rule, regulation, or guideline. This submittal is not intended to be, and shall not be construed in any way as, a waiver of any such rights. Moreover, we reserve the right to provide further comments, consult with the Secretary, take any other necessary steps, and engage with Reclamation as it proceeds with subsequent phases of the Post-2026 Operations NEPA process.

Conclusion

The UDS Alternative protects Lake Powell storage for the benefit of both the Upper and Lower Basins, mitigates the risk of either Lake Powell or Lake Mead reaching dead pool, and is consistent with the Law of the River.

We ask that Reclamation advance this UDS Alternative through the NEPA process and that Reclamation model and evaluate the impacts of this Alternative in its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Post-2026 Operations. The UDS are willing to work with Reclamation to optimize the UDS Alternative in order to facilitate Reclamation's development of a preferred alternative.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Mitchell
Governor's Representative
State of Colorado

Gene Shawcroft
Governor's Representative
State of Utah

Estevan Lopez
Governor's Representative
State of New Mexico

Brandon Gebhart
Governor's Representative
State of Wyoming

For Immediate Release
March 6, 2024

Contacts:

Arizona Department of Water Resources
Doug MacEachern, 602-510-0104

Colorado River Board of California
Jessica Neuwerth, 818-254-3202

Southern Nevada Water Authority
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ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA PROPOSE NEW APPROACH FOR POST-2026 COLORADO RIVER OPERATIONS

~ Alternative addresses the impacts of drought and climate change through a holistic and sustainable approach to the coordinated operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead that improves predictability for water users ~

Phoenix, Ariz (March 6, 2024,) – The Lower Basin States in the Colorado River Basin today jointly submitted to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) a proposed alternative for long-term Colorado River operations that would help ensure the river system's health and sustainability for decades to come.

The alternative, drafted collaboratively by Arizona, California and Nevada, is designed to provide for sustainable management of the system under a very broad range of future conditions that have been exacerbated by drought and climate change. It reflects a new and more holistic approach to Colorado River management, in which required reductions are based on the health of seven major system reservoirs.

Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Tom Buschatzke, Colorado River Commissioner for California JB Hamby, and Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) General Manager John Entsminger jointly submitted the alternative to Reclamation as part of the federal agency's process to develop new post-2026 operating guidelines for the river.

"The Lower Basin Alternative submitted today to Reclamation represents a serious commitment to the health of the Colorado River. The magnitude of these reductions is both difficult and necessary," said ADWR Director Buschatzke, Arizona's designated representative on Colorado River issues. "This is our commitment to working with our river partners to protect the Colorado River from Wyoming to Mexico."

The alternative creates a path toward greater long-term stability in a river system wracked in recent decades by the effects of drought, climate change, and over-allocation, which have required additional proactive efforts such as the 2019 Drought Contingency Plans and more dramatic efforts in 2022-2023 to protect the system from reaching critically low elevations.

Importantly, as part of the alternative, users at and downstream of Lake Mead would reduce uses of Colorado River water by 1.5 million acre-feet each year under a broad range of conditions to address the structural deficit and future aridification caused by climate change. The structural deficit causes Lake Mead to decline annually, even under normal releases from Lake Powell upstream. Water lost to evaporation and river seepage in the Lower Basin contributes to this annual decline. A recent Reclamation report estimates these losses total about 1.3 million acre-feet annually within the Lower Basin.

“While addressing the structural deficit in the Lower Basin is a critical step in stabilizing the Colorado River, developing durable, long-lasting solutions requires all water uses to manage demands and commit to water conservation,” said SNWA General Manager John Entsminger, Nevada’s representative on the Colorado River. “Providing a framework that would better align future water demands with available supplies, the Lower Basin Alternative provides greater protections for the river and more certainty for its users.”

If system conditions deteriorate further, all water users would collectively participate in the solution. Under the Lower Basin Alternative, those additional reductions, beyond the initial 1.5 million acre-feet that would be solely assigned to the Lower Basin and Mexico, would be shared between the Upper and Lower basins and Mexico – up to a total of 3.9 million acre-feet of reductions.

“The Lower Basin Alternative creates resiliency and proposes climate change is a shared responsibility of all those that depend on the Colorado River,” said Colorado River Commissioner JB Hamby. “We need new ways of thinking to solve problems that have been unresolved for nearly a century and solutions for future challenges like climate change and extended drought — that’s what the Lower Basin Alternative does. Each basin, state, and sector must contribute to solving the challenges ahead. No one who benefits from the river can opt out of saving it.”

The alternative links Colorado River use to storage volumes contained within multiple Upper and Lower Basin reservoirs, ensuring that current and future water uses remain balanced with supplies. Unlike the current guidelines, which are based on Lake Mead and Lake Powell elevations, the Lower Basin states propose basing reductions on the volumes of water contained within seven Upper and Lower basin reservoirs.

This total system contents method performs better at protecting critical reservoir elevations than today’s operations, provides more certainty in addressing the effects of climate change, and largely eliminates the use of forecasts from decision-making on reduction volumes.

The alternative also proposes new release criteria for water from Lake Powell to Lake Mead. These criteria are streamlined compared to the current guidelines. Releases are based primarily upon reservoir contents in the Upper Basin. The alternative responds to hydrologic shortages in the Upper Basin by reducing releases from Lake Powell as Upper Basin use is impacted.

Many of the rules currently governing Colorado River system operations expire in 2026, including the 2007 Interim Shortage Guidelines and the 2019 Drought Contingency Plans. Last year, Reclamation initiated an environmental review process to develop new rules for post-2026 operations. Water managers across the Colorado River Basin – including federal, state, and tribal managers – have been negotiating a consensus-based alternative that could be proposed as part of that process.

Alternatives proposed to Reclamation, including the Lower Basin alternative, will be reviewed as part of the multi-year environmental review process led by Reclamation.

Meanwhile, the Lower Basin states acknowledge that the best path forward for all users of the Colorado River is one that the seven states can unanimously support. The Lower Basin states remain committed to working with the Upper Basin states, Mexico, water users, Tribes, stakeholders, and NGOs to develop a Basin-wide consensus-based alternative for further evaluation.

A copy of the Lower Basin Alternative is linked here.

Quotes regarding the Lower Basin Alternative

"Protecting the future of the Colorado River must be a collective effort. The approach that was sent to the federal government today is a tremendous step forward, but there's more to do. We need everyone across the Colorado River Basin working together to find the solutions necessary to protect the future of the Colorado River." – **Brenda Burman**, General Manager, Central Arizona Project

"The alternative proposed today goes further and thinks bigger than anything previously done to protect the Colorado River. We have developed a framework that could bring lasting sustainability to the Colorado River. But it will take participation from each and every one of us. Every water user across the Basin must commit to using less, while as a Basin we look for opportunities to augment supplies. If we all step up, we can implement a holistic plan that is inclusive of cities, farms, tribes and the environment, and leaves no one without water, ensuring we all thrive." – **Adel Hagekhalil**, General Manager, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

"Over the last two decades, we have seen that the Colorado River is producing less water due to unprecedented warmer and drier conditions and a historic drought. Going forward, the Colorado River needs to be managed holistically as proposed by the Lower Basin States and not by one crisis after another. This common-sense alternative will provide greater predictability and long-term stability for all water users in the Colorado River Basin. The wise management of the Colorado River is important to our member municipalities in the Phoenix metropolitan area, which collectively provide water to over 3.7 million residents – more than half of Arizona's population – and to the businesses and industries that support the regional and national economy." – **Warren Tenney**, Executive Director, Arizona Municipal Water Users Association

"Palo Verde Irrigation District endorses the Lower Basin Alternative for future operation of the Colorado River. The unified Lower Basin adaptive management approach will stabilize river flows for generations and secure reliable water for agriculture. It will also benefit Mexico, the Upper Basin States, and the population of 40 million people throughout the Basin. Much work remains ahead for Reclamation, the Upper Basin, Mexico, and the Lower Basin to collaborate toward implementing this practical, realistic alternative." – **Bart Fisher,** President, Palo Verde Irrigation District Board of Trustees

"As one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, having greater predictability on the water supply from the Colorado River is critical in planning for future growth, which the Lower Basin States alternative proposal provides. The alternative proposal also provides the collaborative, balanced and sustainable approach that's needed to successfully manage the river."
– **Barbara Chappell**, Water Services Director, City of Goodyear, Arizona

"CVWD supports the need to update the Colorado River operations rules in addressing the current and future impacts of changing hydrology. We believe the framework outlined in the Lower Basin Alternative provides a rational path forward for the system's long-term health and stability. Shared responsibility among all seven states ensures reliability for all 40 million people and 5.5 million acres of farms that depend on the River. CVWD is committed to doing our part."
– **Jim Barrett,** General Manager, Coachella Valley Water District

"Phoenix is dedicated to delivering safe and reliable water to its 1.7 million customers. With this objective in mind, city leaders welcome the collaboration among the Lower Basin states to develop a strategy for Colorado River operations that addresses the challenges of overallocation and climate change. This pivotal moment calls for an unprecedented level of unity, creativity, and commitment from all stakeholders across every sector as we strive to ensure the long-term viability of the river. Phoenix shares the goal of all parties: adapt, innovate, and work collectively to secure the future of the Colorado River for our communities and future generations." – **Cynthia S. Campbell**, W ater Resources Management Advisor, City of Phoenix

"The Imperial Irrigation District appreciates the collaborative efforts within the Lower Division States to craft an alternative for Reclamation to model as it moves forward with developing post-2026 operating guidelines. Through hard work, and a collective willingness to listen and consider each agency's perspective, we have made significant strides forward since last year. IID is committed to continuing the conversations necessary to allow for consideration of a compromise proposal that balances water supply certainty for our community during a record-breaking drought, while still protecting the district's longstanding legal positions and senior water rights." – **Jamie Asbury,** General Manager, Imperial Irrigation District

Our Yuma agricultural community has existed for generations along the Colorado River, and we support analysis of the Lower Basin Alternative by the Bureau of Reclamation. We are pleased to see Lower Basin negotiators take the River's challenges seriously and prepare an Alternative that recognizes the need to make reductions across the Colorado River Basin in a predictable and realistic manner. – **Robert Woodhouse**, Board President of Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation & Drainage District

"*Since time immemorial, the Quechan people have relied on the Colorado River for our physical and spiritual sustenance, and the Tribe is deeply committed to ensuring that this living river remains healthy and capable of providing for the people and ecosystems that rely on it,*" said **Quechan Tribal Council President Jordan Joaquin.** *"It is why we have always fought for and will continue to defend our water. Particularly in the face of climate change and the hydrologic challenges it creates, it is essential that the post-2026 management framework for the River provides for human and ecosystem needs, protects tribal water rights, and reflects a viable strategy for preserving the River for us all. The alternative the Lower Basin States of Arizona, California, and Nevada submitted today to the Bureau of Reclamation marks an important step toward this goal, and I commend the Lower Basin States for their hard and collaborative work in reaching this point. I particularly appreciate their thoughtful plan for addressing the structural deficit and the proposal to move away from a reliance on forecasts to making management decisions based on total system contents. We look forward to our continued engagement with Reclamation, our sister tribes, the Basin states, and other key stakeholders as this process continues to ensure that we reach a sustainable outcome."*

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The Colorado River Basin States Representatives of Arizona, California, and Nevada

March 6, 2024

The Honorable Camille Calimlim Touton
Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Lower Basin Alternative for the Post-2026 Coordinated Operation of the Colorado River Basin

Dear Commissioner Touton:

The undersigned Governors' Representatives of Arizona, California, and Nevada (Lower Division States) appreciate the opportunity to submit the attached alternative (Lower Basin Alternative) for the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to analyze as part of Reclamation's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review to adopt guidelines and coordinated reservoir management strategies to address future operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. These new guidelines will take effect when the 2007 Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead (2007 Interim Guidelines) expire in 2026 as described in the Scoping Report for Post-2026 Colorado River Reservoir Operations (88 FR 72535, October 20, 2023) (Scoping Report).

This Lower Basin Alternative is designed to provide for the sustainable management of the Colorado River system and its resources under a wide range of potential future system conditions due to a changing climate, consistent with the Scoping Report. Since Reclamation initiated this action in June 2023, the Colorado River Basin States (Basin States) have been working to develop a consensus alternative, as noted in the Basin States' August 15, 2023, scoping letter. Although there is agreement among the Basin States regarding the need to provide for operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead under a wide range of potential future system conditions due to a changing climate, at this point the seven Basin States have been unable to agree on a consensus alternative. The Lower Division States look forward to further discussions with the Upper Division States, as well as Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders, to develop a consensus while Reclamation evaluates alternatives.

Participation by Mexico

The Lower Basin Alternative includes assumptions regarding participation by Mexico in reductions; surplus deliveries; and the conservation, augmentation, and storage program commensurate with prior Treaty Minutes. We recognize that any participation by Mexico will be determined in a separate process with Mexico. However, to provide sufficient information for analysis of the full range of impacts within the United States, changes in flows associated with Mexico's potential participation in surpluses, reductions, conservation and storage need to be analyzed. We look forward to future collaboration with Mexico in this work through the International Water and Boundary Commission and Reclamation.

Background and Key Alternative Concepts

When the Basin States worked with Reclamation and the Department of the Interior (Department) to develop the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the Colorado River Basin had been in drought for seven years and Lake Powell and Lake Mead - nearly full in 2000 - had started to decline. To address the drought and declining reservoirs, the 2007 Interim Guidelines incentivized conservation through the creation of Intentionally Created Surplus and established Lower Basin shortage provisions. But it soon became clear that the 2007 Interim Guidelines were insufficient to reduce the risks of Lake Powell and Lake Mead declining to critically low elevations. In response, the Basin States, Tribes, Mexico, water managers, Reclamation, the Department, and Congress took action through a range of voluntary measures and the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan. These efforts were successful in stabilizing reservoir elevations some of the time, but they have not adequately reduced the risk of the reservoirs declining to critical elevations.

The 2007 Interim Guidelines are expiring as the Colorado River now enters the twenty-fifth year of drought – conditions that have been exacerbated by climate change. Hotter and drier conditions have resulted in reduced run-off into the River that has led to significant declines in Colorado River system storage. The Lower Basin Alternative is designed to address the impacts of drought and climate change through a holistic and sustainable approach to the coordinated operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead that improves predictability for water users by:

1. <u>Addressing the structural deficit in the Lower Basin.</u> This Alternative includes reductions from Lower Basin state apportionments and deliveries to Mexico by 1.5 million acre-feet (maf) (static reduction) under most system conditions. The static reduction is larger than the structural deficit in the Lower Basin regardless of the various ways that the structural deficit may be calculated.
2. <u>Operating the reservoirs based on system contents rather than elevations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead</u>. The Lower Basin Alternative shifts to a more holistic, system wide, approach that is based on actual hydrology and total system contents instead of forecasts and individual reservoir elevations.

3. Sharing water use reductions broadly. This Alternative recognizes the need to make water use reductions from state apportionments under most system conditions and shares those reductions predictably among the Lower Basin water users and Mexico. Under the most critical system conditions, the Alternative shares water use reductions between the Upper Basin and Lower Basin including Mexico.
4. Including provisions for storage and delivery of stored water. The Lower Basin Alternative's approach includes opportunities for storage and augmentation that will encourage innovation and investment.
5. Establishing releases from Lake Powell that are adaptable to a broad range of hydrologies and respond to "hydrologic shortages." This Alternative adjusts releases to respond to factors impacting Upper Basin use. Additionally, most balancing conditions are removed to avoid conflict between the Upper and Lower Basins.

The Lower Basin Alternative is designed to achieve a sustainable volume of water in system storage. That storage will help to protect infrastructure and habitat and provide predictability for water users. The Alternative's reduction framework is triggered by total system contents (as opposed to forecasts) to determine the operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The Alternative also includes opportunities for storage, augmentation, demand management, and other water management strategies.

The Lower Basin Alternative represents a compilation of strategies based on the lessons learned from the 2007 Interim Guidelines as well as hydrologic supply and demand information gleaned over recent decades. The elements of this Alternative are related and interdependent; removing or replacing one or more of these elements without full consideration of the entire Alternative would likely diminish the management value.

This letter describes various aspects of the Lower Basin Alternative and should be read in conjunction with the attached technical document.

Total System Contents

The Lower Basin Alternative shifts away from the reliance in the 2007 Interim Guidelines on the 24-Month Study forecasts and elevations in Lake Powell and Lake Mead to determine reservoir releases and Lower Basin shortages. This Alternative instead primarily uses actual hydrology and total system contents—a recognition that, whatever the elevation of a particular reservoir in the system may be, sustainable management must be focused on contents that are actually available in the system as a whole. "Total system contents" includes the contents of Flaming Gorge, Blue Mesa, Navajo, Powell, Mead, Mohave, and Havasu.[1] In addition to more holistically

[1] For purposes of this Lower Basin Alternative, "total system contents" is the total volume of water in live storage within Flaming Gorge Reservoir, Blue Mesa Reservoir, Navajo Reservoir, Lake Powell, Lake Mead, Lake Mojave, and Lake Havasu. Inclusion of the Colorado River Storage Project Act Initial Units is not intended to open the Records of Decision for those facilities.

managing the system, moving away from forecasts and reservoir elevations and instead relying on actual hydrology and system contents should reduce disagreements among and between the Basins that have resulted from reliance on Lake Powell and Lake Mead elevations and 24-Month Study forecasts in the past.

Water Use Reductions

The Lower Basin Alternative proposes a new framework for determining annual water use reductions when total system contents are:

- 69% - 58%: cuts to Lower Basin water uses increasing from 0 to 1.5 maf
- <58% - 38%: static cut to Lower Basin water uses of 1.5 maf
- <38% - 23%: static cut to Lower Basin water uses of 1.5 maf plus additional, evenly split cuts to Upper Basin and Lower Basin water uses as total system reductions increase from 1.5 maf to 3.9 maf.[2] Reductions would remain at 3.9 maf below 23%.

This approach resolves the structural deficit in the system between Lee Ferry and the U.S.-Mexico border, reduces the risk of the system declining to critical levels, shares water use reductions broadly, improves predictability for water users, and includes the Upper Basin in water reductions under the most critical system conditions. Most fundamentally, this framework commits stakeholders to the simple principle that when less water is available in the system, less water should be taken from the system.

Releases from Glen Canyon Dam

Linking Lower Basin water use reductions to total system storage rather than the elevation of Lake Mead reduces the significance of the relative volumes of water in Lakes Powell and Mead. The Lower Basin Alternative includes a Glen Canyon Dam release regime designed to minimize risk of noncompliance with the 1922 Compact while providing benefits to power generation, in-stream resources at the Grand Canyon and habitat below Lake Powell, and the recreational attributes of Lakes Powell and Mead.

Like Lower Basin water use reductions, annual release volumes from Lake Powell are set based on live storage in the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) Initial Units: Flaming Gorge Reservoir, Blue Mesa Reservoir, Navajo Reservoir, and Lake Powell (described in this Alternative as “Total UB System Contents”). In most years, Glen Canyon Dam releases will be determined by a combination of Total UB System Contents and Upper Basin depletions in the previous three years. When Upper Basin depletions decrease due to aridification and/or “hydrologic shortage,” releases from Lake Powell decrease as well.

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[2] The Lower Division States are also requesting that Reclamation model a range of reductions in the Upper Basin up to 2.4 maf in this zone to provide a full range of analysis.

The attached technical document provides more detail, but in general the Glen Canyon Dam annual release regime is based on four bands of Total UB System Contents, with a potential April adjustment to protect Lake Mead elevation 1000 ft. When Total UB System Contents are:

> Greater than 80% ("Equalization Release"). Balance the contents of Lakes Powell and Mead as closely as practicable with releases between 8.5 maf to 11.0 maf.
>
> Greater than 30% and less than or equal to 80% ("Hydrologic Shortage-Based Release"). Releases vary in a stepwise fashion between 7.0 maf and 8.5 maf depending on the extent of Upper Basin "hydrologic shortage."
>
> Greater than 20% and less than or equal to 30% ("Reduced Release Ramp"). Releases of 6.0 maf to 7.0 maf determined as a linear function.
>
> Total UB System Contents less than or equal to 20% ("Static Release"). Release of 6.0 maf.

Conservation, Innovation, and Investment

Since the 2007 Interim Guidelines were adopted, water managers in the Lower Division States have been working individually and in partnership to adapt to the stresses on the Colorado River system resulting from drought and climate change. The Lower Basin, in partnership with the United States and Mexico, has invested billions of dollars over the interim period to conserve water for the benefit of the Colorado River system and the development of intentionally created surplus. Many of these investments are ongoing and will continue well beyond 2026.

As a result of that investment, water users in the Lower Basin and Mexico have conserved enough water to bolster the elevation in Lake Mead by 91 feet. The success of these collaborative efforts enabled the Lower Division States to propose the Lower Basin Plan to conserve 3 million acre-feet over 4 years to address short-term protection of the Colorado River system, adopted as the preferred alternative in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement released yesterday. In 2023 alone, the Lower Basin reduced its consumptive use to 5.8 million acre-feet – leaving 1.7 million acre-feet in the system.

The Lower Basin Alternative seeks to retain the core concepts of conservation, augmentation, and storage from the 2007 Interim Guidelines but will include updates to the program based on operational experience. The Lower Basin Alternative recommends a broad range of parameters for evaluation at this time. We are still developing the details and expect to narrow the range as we work with our respective stakeholders in the coming months. Ultimately, we support a program that allows for the storage of conserved and augmentation water to incentivize

conservation, innovation, and investment that does not influence the coordinated operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

Intrastate Processes and Federal Support

Although we have proposed the Lower Basin Alternative, we still have work to achieve consensus support within our respective states, allocate reductions within our states, and seek support from the Upper Division States, Basin Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and Mexico. Throughout the Lower Basin both tribal and non-tribal water users will be significantly affected by water supply reductions.

To achieve the necessary stakeholder support within our respective states, we will likely need to work together to find partnership and funding opportunities to further the conservation programs and augmentation projects necessary to achieve the Alternative's water use reductions. We are seeking federal support in those intrastate conversations, including federal resources to reduce the impacts to both tribal and non-tribal water users.

Analysis of Alternatives with Respect to Glen Canyon Dam Infrastructure

The Lower Basin Alternative was designed to meet the purpose and need as described by Reclamation in the Scoping Report. Reclamation more recently has articulated concerns regarding potential cavitation in the river outlet works and scouring in the river bottom below the river outlet works that may occur with greater intensity at lower Lake Powell elevations. We understand the following based on the 38 Sovereigns webinar discussion led by Reclamation on February 28, 2024:

i. Reclamation continues to evaluate the extent of its Glen Canyon Dam infrastructure concerns through both physical and computer modeling and will invite stakeholder technical support in completing its reviews.
ii. For purposes of the Post-2026 coordinated river operations NEPA process, Reclamation will neither set a floor for Lake Powell operations in its "No-Action" alternative nor screen any reasonable alternative from consideration that does not maintain Lake Powell above any particular elevation.
iii. Reclamation is considering several potential infrastructure modifications that may mitigate or eliminate concerns with operations occurring at Lake Powell elevations requiring use of the river outlet works.

We look forward to working with Reclamation to evaluate the infrastructure vulnerabilities mentioned and help develop solutions. We anticipate that protecting Glen Canyon Infrastructure may involve a host of strategies including infrastructure modifications, strategic releases from CRSP units, and water use reductions in both the Upper and Lower Basins.

Importantly, however, based on our preliminary reviews, the Lower Basin Alternative is highly effective at keeping Lake Powell above critical elevations. Even during drier hydrologies, when

Lake Powell's elevation may temporarily fall below 3500 feet, the use of total system contents in the Lower Basin Alternative improves flexibility to protect critical infrastructure by enabling the movement of water through the system as necessary for infrastructure protection and environmental flows while satisfying water delivery requirements and Compact obligations.

Reservation of Rights

By providing this alternative, we do not waive any rights, including any claims or defenses, we may have or that may accrue under federal or state law. Recommendation by the undersigned that Reclamation analyze the Lower Basin Alternative shall not be construed as an endorsement or an admission with respect to any factual or legal issue for the purposes of any future legal, administrative, or other proceeding. Moreover, we reserve the right to provide further comments and engage with Reclamation as it proceeds with subsequent phases of the NEPA process.

Conclusion

We appreciate your consideration of the attached Lower Basin Alternative, and we are available to discuss the details with you and with other stakeholders as appropriate. We remain committed to collaborating with other stakeholders, including the Upper Division States, the Republic of Mexico through the International Boundary and Water Commission, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and other water users in the Colorado River Basin. The Lower Basin States look forward to working with Reclamation through the next steps of developing the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Buschatzke, Director
Arizona Department of Water Resources

J.B. Humby, Chairman & Commissioner
Colorado River Board of California

John J. Entsminger, General Manager
Southern Nevada Water Authority

Attachment: Lower Basin Alternative

1. Introduction

Arizona, California, and Nevada (collectively referred to as the Lower Division States) have developed this alternative for analysis and consideration as part of the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the development of the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. This alternative meets the purpose and need of the EIS by updating and expanding management guidelines for Colorado River reservoirs, improving predictability of reductions for Lower Basin water users and water supply reliability, and providing additional mechanisms for conservation, storage, and delivery under a wide range of potential future system conditions due to a changing climate. Moreover, this alternative takes into consideration the imbalance between water supply and demand below Lee Ferry, as climate change continues to impact temperatures, precipitation, and run-off in the Basin. This document should be read and considered in conjunction with the letter to which it is attached.

As explained in the letter, the Lower Basin Alternative incorporates assumptions regarding Mexico's participation in reductions, surplus deliveries, and the conservation, augmentation, and storage program. The assumptions regarding Mexico are commensurate with provisions in past minutes to the 1944 Treaty. While we recognize that any participation by Mexico in these components will be determined in a separate process through the International Boundary and Water Commission with Reclamation's assistance, the impact analysis must consider the cumulative effects of the contemplated actions.

2. Lower Basin Alternative

The Lower Basin Alternative proposes total system contents as a trigger mechanism for water use (including reductions) to provide predictability to Colorado River water users and to address the structural deficit.

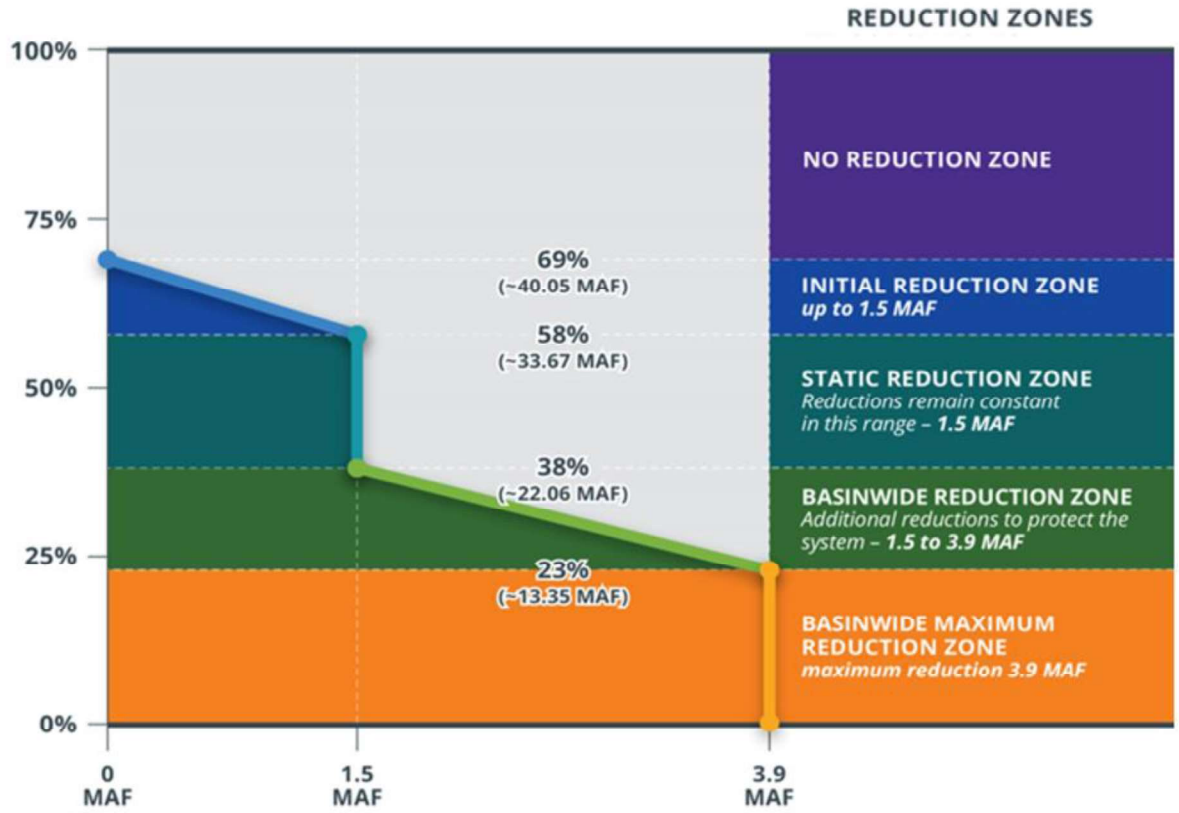
Total System Contents Approach

Under the Lower Basin Alternative, the permitted consumptive use of Colorado River water is a function of the total volume of water in live storage (water above deadpool) within Flaming Gorge Reservoir, Blue Mesa Reservoir, Navajo Reservoir, Lake Powell, Lake Mead, Lake Mojave, and Lake Havasu (hereinafter referred to as "total system contents") so that hydrology and system contents dictate water availability rather than forecasts and individual reservoir elevations. Under most hydrologic conditions, these actions are sufficient to protect approximately 13 million acre-feet of water in live storage (23% of total system contents), a necessary buffer against future hydrologic and operational uncertainties, including potential infrastructure issues.

The Lower Basin Alternative will address water use at all reservoir conditions: Surplus, Normal, and during reductions. The formulation of the three operational elements of the proposed federal action are as follows:

a. Reductions

The Lower Basin Alternative provides discrete levels of reductions associated with specific levels of total system contents as presented below. These reductions are based on decreases in consumptive use for the specified state[1] or reductions in deliveries to Mexico. In some cases, these reductions may be "pre-conserved," as discussed in section (e). The alternative provides criteria for annual basin-wide reductions up to a maximum of 3.9 million acre-feet (MAF). Reductions under the Lower Basin Alternative follow a rule curve (colloquially referred to as the "Z-curve") illustrated below.



[1] At this time, we are proposing reductions to the apportionment of each of the Lower Division States. Intra-state discussion will be necessary to determine how reductions are distributed among water users.

The Z-curve identifies the total system contents of the reservoirs and five distinct reduction zones: No Reduction, Initial Reduction, Static Reduction, Basin-wide Reduction, and Basin-wide Maximum Reduction. Each reduction zone is described below. Reduction volumes should be rounded to the nearest acre-foot and two decimal places should be used to compute total system contents. Reductions in consumptive use resulting from "Bucket 2" projects should also count towards the reductions described below.

i. Initial Reduction Zone

When the total system contents are at or below 69% on August 1, but at or above 58%, the reduction volume for water users in the Lower Division States and Mexico for the subsequent calendar year would be a linear function of total system contents increasing from 0 at 69% to 1.5 million acre-feet at 58%.

The reductions in this zone would be shared as follows: Once the total reduction has been calculated, AZ, NV, and Mexico would share proportionally in reductions up to 300,000 acre-feet, distributed 80.00%, 3.33%, and 16.67%, respectively. For reduction volumes above 300,000 acre-feet, the first 300,000 acre-feet would be calculated as previously mentioned and the incremental reduction above 300,000 acre-feet would be shared proportionally among AZ, CA, NV, and Mexico at a rate of 43.33%, 36.67%, 3.33%, and 16.67%, respectively.

ii. Static Reduction Zone

When the total system contents are below 58% on August 1, but at or above 38% the reduction volume imposed on water users in the Lower Division States and Mexico for the subsequent calendar year would be 1.5 million acre-feet, distributed as follows:

State/Country	Reduction Volume (AF)
Arizona	760,000
California	440,000
Nevada	50,000
Mexico	250,000

iii. Basin-wide Reduction Zone

When the total system contents are below 38% on August 1, but at or above 23%, the reduction volume that would be imposed on water users in the Lower Division States, the Upper Division States, and Mexico for the subsequent calendar year would be a linear function of total system contents increasing from 1.5 million acre-feet at 38% to 3.9 million acre-feet at 23%.

The reductions in this zone above 1.5 million acre-feet would be shared so that 50% is allocated to the Lower Division States and Mexico and 50% is allocated to the Upper Division States. For example, if the calculated reduction is 2.0 million acre-feet, the first 1.5 million acre-feet would be contributed as described in section ii above. The additional 500,000 acre-feet would be shared with the Lower Division States and Mexico reducing use by 250,000 acre-feet and the Upper Division States reducing use by 250,000 acre-feet. At this time, we are not proposing a distribution of the Lower Basin and Mexico share of the additional reduction volume.

Additionally, the Lower Division States request that Reclamation model reductions in the Upper Basin of up to 2.4 million acre-feet per year on the Second Linear Ramp. This will provide a full range of analysis for compliance purposes.

iv. Basin-wide Maximum Reduction Zone

When the total system contents are below 23% on August 1, the reduction volume imposed on water users in the Lower Division States, the Upper Division States, and Mexico for the subsequent calendar year would be 3.9 million acre-feet, to be distributed as described in part 2(a)(iii).

b. Lower Division States and Mexico Surplus

Surplus would occur under a narrower range of conditions than the current operating rules. These rules need further refinement. However, the Lower Basin Alternative envisions surplus would increase as a part of a linear function instead of in step-wise fashion. Surplus would also start occurring with more water in storage. During these surplus conditions, Arizona will receive 240,000 acre-feet of surplus before California receives access to surplus. The Lower Basin Alternative assumes that Mexico will participate in surplus volumes commensurate with Minutes 319 and 323 to the 1944 Treaty.

The Lower Basin States would like Reclamation's assistance in further refining the proposed surplus criteria to evaluate the appropriate triggers, given the total system contents approach for reductions. Because surplus is, at least in part, intended to offset the risk of spilling water, it is important to fully explore how Lake Mead's elevation relates to total system contents and surplus triggers and volumes. We would also like to explore and understand the drivers of the 70R criteria to ensure they are appropriate for our current understanding of hydrologic projections and associated risks.

c. Coordinated Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Lake Powell's release to Lake Mead will also use a broader system contents approach than the current guidelines that is more consistent with section 602(a) of the Colorado River Basin Project Act. The elements of these releases are described below the following summary table.

Lake Powell Operational Tiers

BOWY CRSP Live Capacity (%)	Operational Tier	CRSP Live Storage Volume (MAF)
100	**Equalization Release** (release between 8.5 and 11.0 MAF*)	29.51
80	**Hydrologic Shortage-Based Release Regime**	23.61
30	**Reduced Release Ramp** (release between 6.0 and 7.0 MAF)	8.85
20		5.90
0	**Static Release** (release no more than 6.0 MAF)	0.00

UB Depletions* (3-yr Avg) (MAF)	Release (MAF)
< 3.80	7.0
3.81 - 4.30	7.5
4.31 - 4.80	8.0
> 4.80	8.5

*Includes net reservoir evaporation from Colorado River mainstem reservoirs.

April Adjustment Release

***Flood control operations occur when Powell elevation is greater than 3,700-ft.
April Adjustment Release: Reservoirs balance when Mead's forecasted EOWY elevation is less than 1,000-ft while Powell's forecasted EOWY elevation is greater than 3,510-ft. Releases from Powell are constrained between 6.0 MAF and 11.0 MAF. The balancing determination is made each April and lasts through September.

i. Equalization release

The total system contents approach to reductions reduces the urgency of equalization as it no longer directly affects the Lower Basin's shortage risk. As such, equalization rules could be simplified to provide more flexibility for releases to protect water deliveries, critical infrastructure, power, and Glen and Grand Canyon resources.

If the live storage in the Colorado River Storage Project ("CRSP") Initial Units (Flaming Gorge Reservoir, Blue Mesa Reservoir, Navajo Reservoir, and Lake Powell) on October 1 exceeds 80%, the water-year release will range between 8.5 million acre-feet and 11.0 million acre-feet to equalize live contents in Lake Powell and Lake Mead at the end of the water year to the greatest extent practicable. Should flood control criteria be activated, that criteria will then control the release.

ii. Hydrologic Shortage-Based Release Regime

The Lower Basin Alternative would result in most releases occurring in the "Hydrologic shortage-based release regime." During this operating condition, Upper Basin use is a proxy for ongoing aridification and "hydrologic shortages"[2] occurring within the Upper Basin. As Upper Basin use decreases due to aridification and/or "hydrologic shortages" the volume of water released from Lake Powell decreases as well. If conditions are dry, releases will be less, holding other variables constant.

When the live storage in the CRSP Initial Units on October 1 is greater than 30% but less than or equal to 80%, the release from Lake Powell will vary between 7.0 and 8.5 million acre-feet per water- year based on the average amount of Upper Basin depletions over the three prior water years (including net evaporation from reservoirs) as described further in the table below:

UB Depletions* (3-yr Avg) (MAF)	Release (MAF)
< 3.80	7.0
3.81 - 4.30	7.5
4.31 - 4.80	8.0
> 4.80	8.5

[2] There is no agreed upon definition of the term "hydrologic shortage." It is used colloquially herein to describe a broad range of factors that affect water supply availability in the Upper Division states without taking a position on which of these factors are "shortages."

iii. Reduced Release Ramp

When the live storage in CRSP Initial Units on October 1 is greater than 20% but less than or equal to 30%, the water year release volume from Lake Powell shall be a linear function of live storage in the CRSP Initial Units increasing from 6.0 million acre-feet at 20% to 7.0 million acre-feet at 30%.

iv. Static Releases

When the live storage in the CRSP Initial Units on October 1 is less than or equal to 20%, the water year release volume from Lake Powell shall be 6.0 million acre-feet unless such release volume is not physically possible.

v. April Adjustment

Except during equalization conditions, if on April 1 Lake Mead is projected to end the water-year below elevation 1,000 feet and Lake Powell is projected to end the water-year above elevation 3,510 feet, the water-year release will be adjusted to range between 8.5 million acre-feet and 11.0 million acre-feet to achieve as practicable equal live contents in Lake Powell and Lake Mead at the end of the water year. Once triggered, the release shall be adjusted monthly and occur through the end of the water year.

vi. Emergency Response Actions

The Lower Basin Alternative assumes that the United States will incorporate response operations at upstream Colorado River reservoirs, consistent with their statutory purposes, to protect critical infrastructure at Glen Canyon Dam.

d. Storage and Delivery

The current Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) Program has proven to be a valuable tool by encouraging water conservation and helping to bolster reservoir elevations. However, there are also inequities (both real and perceived) in access to and accounting for ICS. As such, the Lower Basin Alternative proposes concluding the ICS program and developing a new set of rules for future conservation, augmentation and storage.

i. Existing ICS

There are existing provisions for the post-2026 management of ICS created prior to 2026 ("Existing ICS"). The Lower Basin Alternative also contemplates additional rules to allow Existing ICS to be used to offset a portion of the required reductions. The Lower Division

States would like to work with Reclamation to analyze different approaches to the outstanding variables.

ii. Post-2026 Conservation, Augmentation and Storage Program

The Lower Basin Alternative proposes a new program to incentivize conservation and augmentation by allowing storage of that water. The Lower Division States have identified certain parameters for consideration, while others remain under discussion.

The Lower Basin Alternative includes the following parameters for conservation, augmentation and storage:

- The Lower Division States propose that Reclamation analyze accumulation volumes ranging from 5.0 – 10.0 million acre-feet of water for storage by water users in the Lower Division States and Mexico based on conservation and augmentation. The Lower Division States intend to continue our discussions with Reclamation and Mexico, as we determine the appropriate parameters for storage based on conservation and augmentation.
- This stored water will provide flexibility in managing reductions, including allowing for the "pre-conservation" of reductions so that water stored in a previous year could be delivered to offset reduction volumes and/or to avoid inadvertent overruns.
- Delivery of stored water should not allow any state to exceed its basic apportionment when reductions apply in the Lower Basin (except limited inadvertent overruns, augmentation, and tributary conservation water).
- The volume of water stored should be subtracted from the total system contents before reductions are calculated so as not to diminish the volume of reduction that would otherwise occur absent the stored water.

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Southern Nevada Water Authority
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March 6, 2024

The Honorable Camille Calimlim Touton
Commissioner
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Sent via Electronic Mail

Dear Commissioner Touton:

The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) and The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) (collectively the "Water Districts") submit this letter in support of the Lower Basin Alternative for the Post-2026 Coordinated Operation of the Colorado River Basin (Lower Basin Alternative).

A. Background of the Water Districts

The Water Districts provide water to 27 million residents in the Lower Basin. Each Water District takes delivery of water from Lake Mead pursuant to contracts with Secretary of the Department of the Interior. The Colorado River is a significant or exclusive source of water for our agencies and as such, operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead are directly relevant to our ability to provide water to our service areas.

SNWA is a political subdivision of the State of Nevada that provides Colorado River water to its purveyor-member agencies throughout southern Nevada. Colorado River water comprises nearly 90 percent of these water supplies, which serve the needs of the Las Vegas area's 2.3 million residents and more than 40 million tourists each year. SNWA sources, treats, and delivers wholesale water to its purveyor members and oversees regional conservation-programs implementation.

CAWCD is a political subdivision of the State of Arizona, established pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes § 48-3701 et seq., which operates the Central Arizona Project (CAP) pursuant to various contracts and agreements with Reclamation. The CAP canal is a 336- mile system that brings Colorado River water to central and southern Arizona, delivers the State of Arizona's single largest renewable water supply, and provides water to municipalities, tribes and agriculture. CAWCD's service area encompasses Maricopa, Pinal and Pima counties where more than 80% of Arizona's population resides. CAP supply is a critical component of many Arizona tribal water right settlement agreements and provides tribal homeland water to meet the needs of tribal communities in Arizona.

Metropolitan is a political subdivision of the State of California that serves as a wholesale water provider to a 5,250 mile service area in Southern California. After being formed in 1928 by election and an act of the California legislature, Metropolitan's first project was to build the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA). Metropolitan continues to bring Colorado River water into Southern California through the CRA. The Colorado River has been Metropolitan's most secure source of imported water since the district was formed and continues to be a vital source of water supply for the 19 million residents in Metropolitan's service area.

Since the 2007 Interim Guidelines were adopted, the Water Districts have been working individually and in partnership to adapt to the stresses on the Colorado River system resulting from drought and climate change. During this period, even as the Lower Basin experienced substantial population growth, overall Colorado River water use has actually been declining.

For example, over more than 20 years, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has been a leader in conserving Colorado River water supply and planning for a future with less water. This includes an investment of more than $300,000,000 in conservation programs, reducing southern Nevada's consumptive use of Colorado River water by more than 115,000 acre-feet per year since 2002 – or more than a third of Nevada's entire apportionment - even as its population has increased by nearly 800,000 people.

In Arizona, the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) has conserved over 2 million acre-feet in Lake Mead in collaboration with CAWCD water users and dedicated nearly $47 million to projects in Arizona that resulted in an additional 600,000 acre-feet of storage in Lake Mead.

In Metropolitan's service area in Southern California, water use per capita has declined about 40% since the peak. Metropolitan has invested $910 million for conservation programs like the turf replacement program that has transforming more than 200 million square feet of thirsty lawns into sustainable landscapes. Metropolitan is currently collaborating with SNWA and CAWCD in planning a regional recycled water project (Pure Water Southern California) that would be one of the largest recycled water projects in North America.

In addition, the Water Districts have partnered with other water users to conserve Colorado River water and reduce the risk of Lake Mead declining to critical elevations. Those efforts have included the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding, the Pilot System Conservation Program, Minutes 319 and 323 with Mexico resulting in the creation of Binational Intentionally Created Surplus, the 500+ Plan and the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan. Through all these efforts, Reclamation and the Interior Department have been our partners, and we remain committed to continuing that partnership.

B. Support for the Lower Basin Alternative

The Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead (2007 Guidelines) are expiring as the Colorado River enters the twenty-fifth year of drought. The impacts of the drought have been exacerbated by climate change with hotter and drier conditions resulting in reduced run-off into the River and significant declines in Colorado River storage. These alarming conditions far exceed what was anticipated

under the 2007 Guidelines and have led to an increased imbalance between water supply and demand on the Colorado River. These factors further emphasized the need for new and innovative approaches to managing the Colorado River system. As the United States recognized in the Scoping Report for Post-2026 Colorado River Reservoir Operations, "[b]ased on operational experience since 2007, the current guidelines are not robust enough to manage in a way that is sufficiently protective of the resources dependent on the Colorado River."

The Lower Basin Alternative takes a fresh look at system operations and proposes a new, innovative, and robust approach to managing the River and its critical infrastructure. This fresh look builds on the foundation of the Law of the River and proposes a more holistic and sustainable approach to managing the Colorado River system reservoirs. The Lower Basin Alternative shares proposed water use reductions fairly among the Lower Basin States and Mexico to satisfy the 1.5 maf of proposed reductions under most system conditions. Further, under the most critical system conditions, the Alternative shares water use reductions fairly between the Upper Basin and Lower Basin including Mexico. The Lower Basin Alternative contemplates a broad, fair, and equitable sharing of reductions such that no one state, sector or water user bears the entire burden of protecting the system.

The Water Districts support the Lower Division States' request for Reclamation to analyze the Lower Basin Alternative for the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Further dialogue and collaboration among the Basin States, water users, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and Reclamation will be required to work out additional details, and to achieve consensus support within each state. The Water Districts intend to work collaboratively within each of our states to achieve that consensus. The Lower Basin Alternative is an important step toward new guidelines that will ensure a healthy Colorado River system for all that rely on it.

Thank you,

John J. Entsminger, General Manager
Southern Nevada Water Authority

Adel Hagekhalil, General Manager
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Brenda Burman, General Manager
Central Arizona Water Conservation District

cc: Amanda Erath
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ALEX PADILLA

U.S. SENATOR for CALIFORNIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 6, 2024

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Padilla Applauds Colorado River Lower Basin States' Conservation Proposal

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) issued the following statement after the Lower Basin and Upper Basin States released separate proposals for the *Post-2026 Coordinated Operation of the Colorado River Basin*:

"As we turn toward the long-term operating guidelines to address a historic megadrought and the urgent need to conserve water resources in the Colorado River Basin, the Upper and Lower Basin States must once again work together to reach consensus. Today, the Lower Basin States put forth an alternative that moves past temporary solutions and provides for sustainable management of the Colorado River System that meets the scale and urgency that the climate crisis demands. But reducing Colorado River water use is a shared obligation among all Basin States, and I urge all parties to put aside the rhetoric and do their part. I will continue to work with my colleagues in the region to facilitate true consensus and protect this precious resource for future generations."

Earlier this week, the Bureau of Reclamation separately finalized the updates to the current short-term operating guidelines for the Colorado River. The historic, consensus-based plan will conserve at least 3 million acre-feet of water through 2026, half of which will come from California. In 2023, Colorado River water deliveries to California were the lowest they have been since 1949.

In December, Senator Padilla applauded the Department of the Interior's announcement of approximately $367 million to California partners to protect the Colorado River Basin, including nearly $295 million for several water conservation agreements with California water agencies. Padilla also worked to ensure that the *Inflation Reduction Act* included $4 billion for drought resiliency and inland waterways to specifically address the issues at the Salton Sea. He secured $250 million in IRA funding for public health and ecosystem projects at the Salton Sea, which enabled California to move forward on its water conservation efforts.

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