



**THE COLORADO  
RIVER AUTHORITY  
OF UTAH**

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**For immediate release**

## **Utah supports Lower Basin proposal for additional cuts in Colorado River Use**

SALT LAKE CITY (May 23, 2023) — Following the release yesterday of the Lower Basin Plan to reduce use of the Colorado River, Utah and its fellow Upper Basin states are supportive of the proposed reductions in Lower Basin use while emphasizing that their support does not constitute an endorsement of the Lower Basin Plan.

“The Lower Basin States have worked diligently to put forth a plan that has real promise to achieve significant reductions,” said Gene Shawcroft, Utah’s Colorado River commissioner. “While further analysis is necessary, we are pleased to see such a plan put forward.”

The proposal developed by the Lower Basin states of California, Arizona and Nevada would reduce their Colorado River use by at least three million acre-feet (MAF) by 2026. All seven states that share the Colorado River agree the proposal should be analyzed by the Department of Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation as part of the ongoing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to modify Colorado River operations for the next three years. The Plan calls for payment to Lower Basin water users of up to \$1.2 billion for the additional reductions using federal Inflation Reduction Act funds.

“While Utah supports Reclamation’s analysis of the Lower Basin plan, what we need are permanent, uncompensated reductions in Lower Basin use to help bring the system into balance,” said Amy Haas, executive director of the Colorado River Authority of Utah. “This will require that the Secretary of Interior make hard decisions in the future.”

The four Upper Basin states (Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico) have not been privy to specifics about the Lower Basin Plan and have insisted that the Lower Basin demonstrate that the proposed reductions are verifiable and enforceable. Utah will have an opportunity to weigh-in on the Lower Basin alternative once it has been modeled and released for public comment pursuant to NEPA.

In a letter sent to the Bureau of Reclamation on May 22, 2023, all seven Basin States requested that Reclamation further analyze the Lower Basin proposal and urged Reclamation to pivot to planning for post-2026 operations as early as June.

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### **The Colorado River Authority of Utah**

Established in 2021, The Colorado River Authority of Utah is a state agency with a mission to protect, use, conserve, and develop Utah's Colorado River system interests. The Authority collaborates with peer agencies in the six other Colorado River Basin states. Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah make up the Upper Division States, while Arizona, California, and Nevada are the Lower Basin States. Follow the Authority on Twitter [@AuthorityUT](https://twitter.com/AuthorityUT)

**Contact:**

**Marty Carpenter**

**801.971.3601**

**[mcarpenter@northboundstrategy.com](mailto:mcarpenter@northboundstrategy.com)**