



NAC Recommendations to the CRAU Board on Post-2026 Operation Guidelines January 4, 2024

Good afternoon. My name is Chris Robinson. I am the co-chair of the Northern Advisory Council.

Let me start by thanking River Commissioner Shawcroft, Executive Director Haas, and Authority Board members for the opportunity to comment on the post-2026 Guidelines. We are grateful in particular for Commissioner Shawcroft requesting our advisory council input as he engages with other Basin states in negotiation. We also appreciate this Board taking into account our recommendations.

The NAC made several general recommendations to the Board in January of 2023. As we've prepared for these post 2026 Guideline comments we have reviewed those comments and believe they continue to be relevant and can help inform the Board as it continues its work. We intend to send an updated version of our council's general recommendations in the near future.

As for the post-2026 Guideline discussion, attached are our councils' recommendations:

- Lake Powell and Lake Mead need to operate independently so Lake Mead can serve Lower Basin irrigation and Lake Powell can serve Upper Basin storage to meet compact requirements. Utah should advocate for doing away with the balancing tiers.
- The state of Utah and all Basin states should continue to commit resources and funding to promote meaningful and measurable agricultural optimization projects.
- The Lower Basin should take cuts commensurate with hydrology in a similar manner as the Upper Basin.
- Utah should work to either make Demand Management happen or another scenario similar to Lower Basin ICS for Upper Basin in CRSP reservoirs. Users should be able to bank water under a Utah account in Lake Powell. This will allow water users to shepherd water to Lake Powell and bank it for another day. Any Demand Management program needs to be transparent and durable.

- Protecting the health and resiliency of the Colorado River ecosystem is fundamental to ensuring the river system's continued viability and its ability to provide for people and nature. The post-2026 guidelines should factor in the need to assess the full extent of impacts across a range of ecosystems, habitats, and communities in evaluating water supply options, including steps to avoid or mitigate negative impacts. This is particularly necessary in light of changing hydrologic conditions and the need for resiliency. The new guidelines should focus on stabilizing the system in relation to climate change impacts.
- Finally, we support continued and enhanced tribal involvement in all key water discussions related to the Colorado River

It is our sincere hope that the above recommendations can provide the River Commissioner and the Board with ideas that can prove helpful in your ongoing negotiations with the other Basin states.

On behalf of the Northern Advisory Council, thank you again for your consideration of our recommendations.