



**COLORADO RIVER
AUTHORITY OF UTAH
DEFENDING EVERY DROP**

Utah supports post-2026 proposal for Lake Powell, Mead

SALT LAKE CITY (March 6, 2024) – In a significant step toward sustainable Colorado River management, Utah joined its sister states of Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming in submitting a plan for operating Lake Powell and Lake Mead starting in 2026.

Why it matters

This proposal, designed within the limitations of Mother Nature and consistent with existing laws and regulations, aims to address the challenges faced by both the Upper and Lower Division States.

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

Go deeper

The proposal focuses on adapting operations to actual hydrologic conditions, rebuilding storage at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, responding to the uncertainties of climate change and managing the two reservoirs to address water supply and demand imbalances. It also highlights the importance of responsiveness to scientific data and acknowledges hydrologic shortages and settled but undeveloped Tribal water rights in the Upper Basin.

Shawcroft further noted, “Collaboration remains key. We are committed to working alongside the Lower Division States of Arizona, California and Nevada to address shared challenges. The proposal outlines additional contributions by the four Upper Division States, such as voluntary conservation programs and releases from Colorado River Storage Project Act units, demonstrating our proactive stance in protecting Lake Powell’s ability to support the entire Colorado River system.”

While Utah fully supports the four-state submittal, the state remains committed to pursuing the development of a plan that would include all seven Colorado River Basin states.

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The Colorado River Authority of Utah

Established in 2021, The Colorado River Authority of Utah is defending every drop of Utah's share of the Colorado River. As 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 Division States. Follow the Authority on Twitter [@AuthorityUT](https://twitter.com/AuthorityUT)

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