



MEMORANDUM

TO: IEDA Board
FROM: Ed Gerak
RE: Water Committee Report
DATE: June 14, 2024

Hydrology

As of June 9th, Upper Colorado system storage sits at 14.06 MAF (47% of system total). The majority of this is stored in Lake Powell, with 8.86 MAF (38% of lake storage). SWE peaked on April 3rd at 114% of median. Unfortunately, 900K AC-FT disappeared from the projections from April to May. This is the second year in a row with major unexpected losses. We have asked BOR to revise their modeling to more accurately account for SWE and runoff. WY2025 Most Probable forecast is 9.15 MAF, with a 7.48 MAF release from Powell most probable based on May 2024 modeling.

The current system storage in the Lower Basin is 43%, up 2 % from this time last year. Lake Mead holds 8.87 MAF (34% Full). In discussions with APA, WAPA projections are Pollyanna again, so APA expects to revise its budget to match 2024 expectations. Imperial Irrigation District is the only major conservation piece remaining, and Mexico signed Minute 340 to conserve more water, but projections continue to exceed rationale expectations.

Post 2026

Despite the Upper Basin insisting on not taking any cuts in their Post-2026 proposal, it seems that there may be some movement in their position. At the Colorado River Conference in Boulder, Becky Mitchell (CO) expressed optimism regarding the Upper and Lower Basins achieving a consensus. Tom Buschatzke echoed this sentiment, with a desire to avoid litigation. This would be an important step in possibly getting hydropower interests included in any must pass Post-2026 legislation. I am meeting with ADWR & CAP before the meeting and will report on the progress from that meeting.

Related to the Post-2026 process, Tribal entities recognize improved participation, but lament that they still aren't on par with states.

Bureau of Reclamation

Lower Basin water conservation efforts received a boost by setting aside \$700M in Bucket 2 money from the BIL. This has the potential to save more than 700K AC-Ft in Lake Mead.

The Bureau has updated its Colorado River System Consumptive Uses and Losses Report using recalculated data. The report presents recalculated estimates for calendar years 1971 to 2015 in the lower system and 1971 to 2023 in the upper system.

The Department of the Interior (& BOR) propose to revise seven categorical exclusions. The proposed revisions would clarify existing CEs on certain financial assistance funding, water-related contracting, and use authorization actions to allow for more consistent interpretation and more efficient review of appropriate actions based on Reclamation's experience implementing these CEs.

PFAs

BASF has agreed to pay \$316.5M to settle lawsuits filed by public water systems that detected per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in their drinking-water sources. Some PFAS-based film-forming foam products, used in firefighting, incorporated a surfactant produced by Ciba Specialty Chemicals, which BASF acquired in 2009.

Tribal Water Settlements

The Navajo Nation, Hopi and San Juan Southern Paiute tribes have approved a water settlement from the Colorado River. The \$5B project will now go to Congress for approval.

Salt River Project

SRP's reservoir levels going into the summer sit at 93%, thanks to a wet 2023 and above average precipitation in the winter of 2024. They are also participating with ASU on a Healthy Forests Initiative.