



NEWS RELEASE

For Release: August 17, 2022

Contact: Alyx Richards, 801-531-1150, arichards@ucrcommission.com

Salt Lake City - On August 16th, Reclamation released its August 2022 24-Month Study, setting the operating conditions for the Colorado River System for 2023. The system continues to suffer from declining storage and near-record low river flows. Under the current operating rules, the Lower Basin States of Arizona and Nevada, as well as the Republic of Mexico, will suffer deeper shortages under Tier 2a conditions totaling approximately 721,000 acre-feet, while Lake Powell will operate under Lower Elevation Balancing conditions for 2023 with a projected release of seven million acre-feet.

The August 24-Month Study results are stark and point toward accelerating declines in the Colorado River System. In response to these projections and to requests from Reclamation for additional actions to protect critical Colorado River infrastructure, the Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Utah are implementing their 5-Point Plan, including the development of a new water conservation agreement with Reclamation to initiate a System Conservation Pilot Program and beginning conversations in the next few weeks concerning the development of a potential 2023 drought operations plan under the Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan Drought Response Operations Agreement.

The Upper Division States recognize that bringing the system into balance will require efforts from all seven Basin States and Mexico, even in light of the severe shortages that continue to occur in Upper Basin watersheds. However, actions in the Upper Basin may be largely ineffective unless new and significant reductions occur downstream of Lake Mead. To date, no consensus has been reached among the Lower Basin States on new actions to protect the Colorado River System. At this critical moment on the Colorado River, bold measures are necessary, including the assessment and inclusion of evaporation and losses in the Lower Basin in a manner similar to the accounting of evaporation and system losses every year in the Upper Basin. The UCRC supports the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, and willing partners among the Lower Basin States and Tribes as they develop and implement new actions to balance water uses within the Colorado River's available annual supply.

###

Visit the Upper Colorado River Commission website at <http://www.ucrcommission.com>.