



For Release: October 3, 2023

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

Upper Colorado River Basin States, through the Upper Colorado River Commission, Kickoff System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) in 2024

SALT LAKE CITY – At a Special Meeting of the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC) on September 21st, 2023, the Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, acting through the UCRC, agreed to move forward with a narrowed System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) in 2024. The SCPP is operated in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to mitigate the impacts of drought in the Upper Colorado River Basin through funding provided by the Inflation Reduction Act. The Commissioners outlined the need for a program in 2024 that focuses on:

- Projects that can help inform remaining questions regarding the feasibility of potential future Demand Management Storage Agreement programs, or
- Projects that support water conservation innovation and local drought resiliency.

The Commissioners requested improvements to the SCPP process for 2024 based on the UCRC staff's report of "Lessons Learned" from the 2023 process as well as input from interviews with SCPP 2023 program participants. The Lessons Learned summary including recommended improvements along with input from program participants can be found [here](http://www.ucrcommission.com/ucr-304th-part-2-special-meeting) (<http://www.ucrcommission.com/ucr-304th-part-2-special-meeting>).

The UCRC intends to begin the 2024 SCPP application process on October 27th, 2023. The UCRC will host an [informational public webinar](http://www.ucrcommission.com/system-conservation-pilot-program-in-2024/) (<http://www.ucrcommission.com/system-conservation-pilot-program-in-2024/>) on that day to introduce the SCPP and the 2024 application and review process. The 2024 SCPP application materials will be posted on the [UCRC's website](http://www.ucrcommission.com/system-conservation-pilot-program-in-2024/) (<http://www.ucrcommission.com/system-conservation-pilot-program-in-2024/>) concurrent with the webinar. The kickoff webinar will include participation by UCRC staff, Bureau of Reclamation staff, Upper Division State staff, and the UCRC consultant supporting the 2024 effort. Details regarding the application process, 2024 SCPP process and timeline, schedule for follow-up meetings, and the submittal and review process will be provided during that presentation.

In consideration of the 2024 SCPP effort, Colorado's Commissioner and the UCRC's Vice-Chair, Becky Mitchell, said "Colorado water users are on the front lines of climate change. SCPP can help Colorado build drought resiliency tools to support local production and economic vitality."

New Mexico's Commissioner, Estevan Lopez pointed out "While SCPP provides a unique opportunity to learn about how the Upper Basin system conservation programs can help us cope with climate challenges, New Mexico is particularly interested in using the program to inform development of a robust demand management program for the Upper Colorado River Basin."

Gene Shawcroft, Utah's Commissioner, said "Utah is committed to durable and sustainable conservation in our state and the Upper Basin as a whole. The refined SCPP will allow Utah water users to try different tools to adapt to changing Colorado River conditions with the potential to move toward longer-term demand management activities in the future."

Wyoming's Commissioner, Brandon Gebhart indicated "the narrowed SCPP can assist Wyoming's water users as they explore innovative water conservation techniques that help prepare them for a more uncertain future on the Colorado River."

For more information, please reach out to Alyx Richards at the UCRC at 801-531-1150, arichards@ucrcommission.com.

###