



Upper Colorado
River Commission

Upper Colorado River Commissioners Call for Immediate Return to Negotiating Table *Upper Basin proposes mediation to advance a seven-state consensus on Colorado River operations*

SALT LAKE CITY — April 23, 2026 — At the 316th meeting of the Upper Colorado River Commission on April 21, the Upper Division States called for all parties to return to the Colorado River negotiating table and advance a path toward a seven-state consensus.

While time is short, the Commissioners expressed confidence that a consensus agreement for both near-term and long-term operations remains within reach. To advance this effort, the Commissioners proposed immediate mediation among the seven Basin States and the U.S. Department of the Interior/ Bureau of Reclamation.

Given the federal timeline, the Upper Division States today proposed starting the mediation process immediately.

The proposal for mediation attempts to address the current deadlock between Upper Basin and Lower Basin approaches and begin to deal with the Basin's dire hydrologic conditions. The Commissioners believe a structured mediation process can support authentic negotiations and collective action to address the Basin's operational challenges.

The Commissioners identified three focus areas for potential mediation:

- **Operations**
- **Federal funding**
- **Creative and flexible programs**

The Commissioners noted that previously all seven State principals, individually and collectively have advocated for a seven-state consensus framework. Consistent with that sentiment, the Upper Division States are proposing renewed engagement towards collective progress.

The Commissioners of the Upper Division States provided the following statements:

UCRC Chair and Colorado Commissioner, Becky Mitchell

"The time is now to solve the math problem of the Colorado River. Litigation will not generate any new water in this basin. We must stay at the table and work together on real solutions that reflect today's hydrology."

New Mexico Commissioner, Estevan Lopez

"Time is short, but structured negotiations through mediation offer a new path for authentic discussions. Even at this late stage, we should pursue every opportunity to reach a workable agreement."

Utah Commissioner, Gene Shawcroft

"The hydrology is dire and it demands that we collectively develop new solutions. Those solutions must work for both the Upper Basin and Lower Basin if we are going to protect the Colorado River system."

Wyoming Commissioner, Brandon Gebhart

"We still have an opportunity and an obligation to continue to work together, and we should. Wyoming is committed to being part of the solution, and we are willing to work hard alongside our partners to get there. Durable outcomes will require all of us to stay engaged and focused on results."



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About the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC):

The UCRC is an interstate administrative agency made up of duly appointed representatives from the four Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

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