



Upper Division States Through the Upper Colorado River Commission Respond to Record of Decision for 2027–2028 Colorado River Operations

SALT LAKE CITY — August 21, 2026 — The Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, through the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC), acknowledge the Department of the Interior's work to establish new operating guidelines for Lake Powell and Lake Mead during years 2027 and 2028 to address the dire hydrologic conditions in the Colorado River Basin. The Upper Division States are currently reviewing the Record of Decision and look forward to continued discussions about future operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

The Department's approach appears to represent a constructive step toward more closely aligning Colorado River operations with available water supply, which must remain the foundation for future operating decisions. These guidelines may also provide the needed flexibility to respond to changing hydrologic conditions while preserving the opportunity for the seven Basin States and the Department of the Interior to continue working toward a durable, consensus-based solution.

"Operating decisions must be supply-based and acknowledge the hydrologic realities within the basin, including the fact that the Upper Division States strictly regulate water use and already experience mandatory reductions due to state regulation based on available supply," said Colorado Commissioner Becky Mitchell. "This framework provides a near-term path while the Basin States continue working toward a lasting agreement."

"The Record of Decision and 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines provide operational certainty for the next two years along with an opportunity to work with our partners throughout the Colorado River Basin on longer-term, equitable solutions," said New Mexico Commissioner Tanya Trujillo. "We look forward to getting together as soon as possible to develop additional strategies to address the continued dry hydrology we are predicted to see."

Water users across the Upper Basin continue to experience severe impacts from shrinking water supplies. The Commission and the Upper Division States remain committed to developing tools and programs to help address those impacts and be part of the Basin solution.

"The effects of historically poor hydrology are already being felt across Upper Basin communities," said Utah Commissioner Gene Shawcroft. "We remain committed to practical actions that respond to those conditions and support the Upper Basin and the River we all rely on."

The Commission also looks forward to working to complete a successor to the Drought Response Operations Agreement to support Lake Powell through the operations at Flaming Gorge, Blue Mesa and Navajo Reservoirs, including recovery of storage at those reservoirs.

The Department's Record of Decision and 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines provide an important short-term framework, but do not represent a permanent solution to the challenges facing the Colorado River. The Upper Division States remain committed to good-faith engagement with Interior, the Lower Division States, Basin Tribes and other partners throughout the Basin. A consensus agreement among all seven Basin States continues to offer the most durable path forward for water users throughout the Basin.

"The immediate operating framework is important, but the larger work must continue," said Wyoming Commissioner Brandon Gebhart. "The Upper Division States remain committed to working with our federal and Basin State partners toward a sustainable consensus-based solution for the long term."

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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