



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
P.O. Box 61470  
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

IN REPLY REFER TO:

LCB-4225  
2.2.4.23

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

Lisa A. Atkins  
Land Commissioner  
Arizona State Land Department  
1616 West Adams Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Subject: Approval of Calendar Year (CY) 2023 Colorado River Water Diversion – Arizona State Land Department (ASLD)

Dear Lisa Atkins:

The Bureau of Reclamation received ASLD's CY 2023 Colorado River water diversion estimate in which ASLD requests approval to divert up to 61 acre-feet (AF) for domestic use and up to 6,607 AF for irrigation use (for a total diversion of up to 6,668 AF). In accordance with Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations Part 417 (Part 417), this letter provides ASLD with notice of my determination regarding ASLD's proposed diversion and beneficial use of Colorado River water for CY 2023.

Pursuant to Contract No. 7-07-30-W0358, ASLD is entitled to divert up to 1,534 AF per year of Arizona fourth priority Colorado River water for domestic use. Pursuant to Contract No. 4-07-30-W0317 (Irrigation Use Contract), ASLD is entitled to divert up to 6,607 AF per year of Arizona fourth priority Colorado River water and up to 9,067.2 AF per year of Arizona fifth or sixth priority Colorado River water for irrigation use within ASLD's service areas, as specified in Exhibit B of the Irrigation Use Contract.

On August 16, 2022, Reclamation released its Colorado River Basin August 2022 24-Month Study, which projects Lake Mead's January 1, 2023, operating determination elevation to be 1,047.61 feet.<sup>1</sup> In its letter dated September 14, 2022, Reclamation announced that, in accordance with the 2007 Interim Guidelines,<sup>2</sup> Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River will operate in a Tier 2 Shortage Condition in CY 2023.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the 2019 *Lower Basin Drought*

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<sup>1</sup> The CY 2023 operating determination elevation of 1,047.61 feet was calculated by taking Lake Mead's projected end of CY 2022 physical elevation of 1,040.78 feet, as reported in the August 2022 24-Month Study, and adding 480,000 AF of water held back in Lake Powell to Lake Mead's capacity to maintain operational neutrality. Additional information is available at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/24mo/>.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to *Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and the Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead* dated December 13, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> The projected operation determination elevation of 1,047.61 feet is within the Drought Contingency Plan elevation band of 1,045 and 1,050 feet and reflects what is commonly referred to a "Tier 2a" Shortage Condition.

**INTERIOR REGION 8 • LOWER COLORADO BASIN**

ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA\*, NEVADA\*

\* PARTIAL

*Contingency Plan Agreement* (LB DCP Agreement) will also govern the operation of Lake Mead for CY 2023. In accordance with Section XI.G.2.D.1.b of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, 2.4 million AF is apportioned for consumptive use in the state of Arizona in CY 2023 (a reduction of 400,000 AF from its 2.8 million AF basic apportionment). Additionally, in accordance with Section III.B.1.a of Exhibit 1 to the LB DCP Agreement,<sup>4</sup> the state of Arizona will be required to make DCP Contributions in the total amount of 192,000 AF in CY 2023.

Consistent with the Arizona mainstream Colorado River water priority system, there are no reductions to the water supply available to first, second and third priority entitlement holders for CY 2023. As noted in Reclamation's September 14<sup>th</sup> letter, the Arizona fourth priority Colorado River water available supply for CY 2023 is 1,078,962 AF on a consumptive use basis. Of this amount, 106,318 AF,<sup>5</sup> on a diversion basis, is available for distribution among mainstream fourth priority entitlement holders for use in CY 2023 in accordance with the state of Arizona's August 6, 2009, Arizona Shortage Sharing Recommendation<sup>6</sup> and the "pool" approach described by letter dated January 25, 2021.<sup>7</sup> Reclamation has determined that the available Arizona mainstream fourth priority water supply is sufficient to satisfy all initial on-river mainstream water orders for CY 2023. However, given the limited available supply, requests for modifications to increase approved water order amounts will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure approved volumes do not collectively exceed the 106,318 AF of available supply. Arizona fifth priority and/or sixth priority entitlements will not be available for diversion in CY 2023.

Based upon the Shortage Condition determination, a review of the CY 2023 diversion estimate provided by ASLD, and the information gathered during Reclamation's Part 417 consultation, I approve the diversion of up to 6,607 AF for irrigation use and up to 61 AF for domestic use (for a total approved diversion of 6,668 AF) of Colorado River water during CY 2023 for use in ASLD's service areas. This approved diversion will result in an estimated consumptive use of 4,335 AF.

Reclamation would like to highlight that, in accordance with the *Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy*,<sup>8</sup> **accumulations of inadvertent overruns are not permitted in CY 2023 and are suspended as long as a Shortage Condition is in effect.** To assist entitlement holders in monitoring their Colorado River water use to ensure they remain within available quantities, Reclamation will project CY 2023 diversions and consumptive use of Colorado River water during CY 2023 and will make these projections available daily on Reclamation's website<sup>9</sup> beginning in January 2023. Reclamation encourages Colorado River water entitlement holders to use the projections to adjust diversions to remain within their Reclamation-approved annual Colorado River water order.

<sup>4</sup> Referring to *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Operations*. Available at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/dcpdocs/Attachment-B-Exhibit-1-LB-Drought-Operations.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> The mainstream pool will receive 9.85% of the Arizona fourth priority Colorado River water available for CY 2023, calculated as 164,652 AF divided by the difference between Arizona's 2,800,000 AF basic apportionment and the average historical consumptive use by Arizona first, second, and third priority users (1,129,038 AF). The average historical consumptive use by Arizona first, second, and third priority users is based on the four highest years of consumptive use during the five-year period from 2017-2021.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: [https://new.azwater.gov/sites/default/files/8-6-2009\\_ADWR\\_Shortage\\_%20ecommendation.pdf](https://new.azwater.gov/sites/default/files/8-6-2009_ADWR_Shortage_%20ecommendation.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Available at: [https://new.azwater.gov/sites/default/files/01.25.21\\_ADWR\\_CAWCD\\_shortage\\_recommendationLetter.pdf](https://new.azwater.gov/sites/default/files/01.25.21_ADWR_CAWCD_shortage_recommendationLetter.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/IOPP.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Available at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/hourly/forecast.pdf>.

Thank you for submitting ASLD's diversion estimate for CY 2023. Should you have questions, please contact Jeremy Dodds, Water Accounting and Verification Group Manager, at (702) 293-8164 or [jdodds@usbr.gov](mailto:jdodds@usbr.gov). Individuals in the United States, who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunication relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

Sincerely,

**JACKLYNN  
GOULD**  Digitally signed by  
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Date: 2022.12.13  
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