



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

Adel Hagekhalil
General Manager
The Metropolitan Water District
of Southern California
P.O. Box 54153
Los Angeles, CA 90054-0153

Subject: Approval of Calendar Year (CY) 2023 Colorado River Water Order – The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)

Dear Adel Hagekhalil:

The Bureau of Reclamation received MWD's CY 2023 Colorado River water order. In accordance with Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations Part 417 (Part 417), this letter provides MWD with notice of my determination regarding MWD's proposed diversion and beneficial use of Colorado River water for CY 2023.

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.¹ In its letter dated September 14, 2022, Reclamation announced that, in accordance with the 2007 Interim Guidelines,² Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River will operate in a Tier 2 Shortage Condition in CY 2023.³ In addition, the 2019 *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan Agreement* (LB DCP Agreement) will also govern the operation of Lake Mead for CY 2023. The CY 2023 lower Colorado River Shortage Condition will not reduce the volume of Colorado River water available to the state of California in CY 2023. Additionally, no Drought Contingency Plan Contributions are required by California in CY 2023.

MWD's Colorado River water entitlement is based on the California Seven-Party Agreement of 1931, MWD's 1930 Colorado River Water Delivery Contract with Reclamation, as supplemented, and the 2003 *Colorado River Water Delivery Agreement* (CRWDA), which quantifies certain Colorado River water entitlements within the state of California.

Based upon the approved water orders of higher priority California entitlement holders, Reclamation estimates that, of California's Colorado River basic apportionment of 4.4 million AF, 842,558 AF of Colorado River water will be available for consumptive use by MWD in CY 2023. Taking into

¹ 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 acre-feet (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/>.

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

³ 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.

consideration this estimate, a review of MWD's CY 2023 water order, the information gathered during Reclamation's Part 417 consultation, the terms of the CRWDA and other pertinent information, I approve the consumptive use of up to 842,558 AF of Colorado River water by MWD during CY 2023. This consumptive use approval results in an estimated Colorado River water diversion of 845,158 AF. I also approve MWD to divert any unused California basic apportionment of Colorado River water in CY 2023, to the extent such water becomes available.

The table below provides the factors used to develop MWD's approved consumptive use for CY 2023.

Water Budget Factor	Amount (AF)
Priority 4 Water	550,000
1988 Imperial Irrigation District (IID)-MWD Water Conservation Agreement/1989 Approval Agreement ⁴	105,000
Coachella Canal Lining Project (MWD Exchange with the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA))	21,500
Coachella Canal Lining Project (Supplemental Water delivered to the San Luis Ray Settlement Parties)	4,500
All-American Canal Lining Project (MWD Exchange with SDCWA)	56,200
All-American Canal Lining Project (Supplemental Water delivered to the San Luis Ray Settlement Parties)	11,500
IID Transfer to SDCWA (MWD Exchange with SDCWA)	200,000
Priorities 1, 2, and 3b Consumptive Use Below/(Above) 420,000 AF ⁵	(53,967)
Unused Priority 3a ⁵	--
Miscellaneous and Indian Present Perfected Right Consumptive Use ⁵	(2,577)
Lower Colorado Water Supply Project ⁵	8,947
Pilot System Conservation Program (PSCP) – System Conservation Water ^{5,6}	(145)
Funding Agreement – System Conservation Water ^{5,7}	(58,400)
Total Approved Consumptive Use⁵	842,558
Estimated Returns⁵	2,600
Total Approved Diversion⁵	845,158

⁴ Pursuant to the *Second Amendment to Delivery and Exchange Agreement Between Metropolitan and Coachella for 35,000 Acre-Feet* dated December 11, 2019 (Second Amended Exchange Agreement), during CY 2020-CY 2026, the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) shall limit its annual call under the 1989 Approval Agreement, as amended, to 15,000 AF. In return, MWD shall deliver a total of 105,000 AF to CVWD at the Whitewater Service Connection via the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) before the end of CY 2026. In accordance with the Second Amended Exchange Agreement and Letter Agreement No. 21-XX-30-W0710 between Reclamation and CVWD, the actual amount of water delivered to CVWD via the CRA by MWD in CY 2023 will be determined by MWD.

⁵ The amount shown is subject to change based on final accounting records.

⁶ System Conservation Water to be conserved by the City of Needles pursuant to System Conservation Implementation Agreement No. 15-XX-30-W0596, executed under the PSCP. This water will remain in Lake Mead to benefit system storage.

⁷ The estimated amount of System Conservation Water that will be created pursuant to Funding Agreement No. 21-XX-30-W0714. This System Conservation Water will remain in Lake Mead to benefit system storage.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:


- (1) All available Colorado River water within the state of California has been approved for beneficial use within the state. In cases where approvals to senior entitlement holders are less than their Colorado River entitlements, the approvals may be increased to their full entitlements.
- (2) MWD may use information from Reclamation's daily water use forecast⁸ for operational planning. Final accounting records published by Reclamation may differ from the provisional data on this website. MWD diversions occurring as a result of the values on the website are at MWD's own risk.
- (3) Reclamation may at any time rescind this approval to divert unused California adjusted apportionment of Colorado River water.

Reclamation acknowledges that MWD has an approved plan to create up to 450,000 AF of Extraordinary Conservation Intentionally Created Surplus (EC ICS) during CY 2023. The actual amount of EC ICS creation by MWD in CY 2023 is subject to verification by Reclamation and the limits set forth in Section IV.B and Section IV.C of Exhibit 1 to the LB DCP Agreement⁹ and will be based on final accounting. Should MWD elect to take delivery of ICS during CY 2023, MWD is required to request such delivery through means of a revised water order.

Reclamation would like to remind MWD that in accordance with the *Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy*,¹⁰ **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 website⁸ 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.

Thank you for submitting MWD's Colorado River water order 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. 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
JACKLYNN GOULD
Date: 2022.12.16
14:02:22 -08'00'

Jacklynn L. Gould, P.E.
Regional Director

cc: See next page.

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

⁹ 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>.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/IOPP.pdf>.

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