



# United States Department of the Interior



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
LCB-4220  
2.2.4.23

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

James M. Barrett  
General Manager  
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P.O. Box 1058  
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Subject: Approval of Calendar Year (CY) 2026 Colorado River Water Order – Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)

Dear Mr. Barrett:

The Bureau of Reclamation received CVWD's CY 2026 Colorado River water order in which CVWD requests approval to consumptively use up to 377,489 acre-feet (AF) in CY 2026. In accordance with Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations Part 417 (Part 417), this letter provides CVWD with notice of my determination regarding CVWD's proposed consumptive use of Colorado River water for CY 2026.

The *Colorado River Water Delivery Agreement (CRWDA)* quantifies certain Colorado River water entitlements within the state of California, including CVWD's water entitlement. CVWD's CY 2026 consumptive use estimate incorporates CVWD's request to have 15,000 AF of Colorado River water, available to CVWD pursuant to the 1989 Approval Agreement, as amended, delivered to CVWD via the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) by The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). This requested delivery is made in accordance with Letter Agreement No. 21-XX-30-W0710 between Reclamation and CVWD dated May 7, 2021 (Letter Agreement) and Section 13 of 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). In accordance with the Letter Agreement and the Second Amended Exchange Agreement, the actual deliveries to CVWD via the CRA will be determined by MWD.

On July 24, 2023, CVWD entered into System Conservation Implementation Agreement No. 23-XX-30-W0764 (SCIA), as amended,<sup>1</sup> in which CVWD agreed to create up to 35,000 AF of System Conservation Water in lieu of recharging a portion of its available Colorado River water supply in the Thomas E. Levy Groundwater Replenishment Facility. On March 28, 2025, CVWD entered into SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0821,<sup>2</sup> in which CVWD agreed to establish an agricultural conservation program to create up to 10,000 AF of System Conservation Water. In accordance with the relevant

<sup>1</sup> Referring to *System Conservation Implementation Agreement between the United States Bureau of Reclamation and the Coachella Valley Water District to Implement the Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program*.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to *System Conservation Implementation Agreement between the United States Bureau of Reclamation and the Coachella Valley Water District to Implement the Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program*.

sections of the SCIA, CVWD's CY 2026 water order incorporates a delivery reduction of 41,511 AF, accomplished by reducing CVWD's requested delivery at Imperial Dam from 404,000 AF (the amount otherwise available to CVWD in CY 2026 pursuant to the terms of the CRWDA) to 362,489 AF, to incorporate the creation of System Conservation Water.

On August 15, 2025, Reclamation released its Colorado River Basin August 2025 24-Month Study,<sup>3</sup> which projects Lake Mead's most probable elevation on January 1, 2026, to be 1,055.88 feet. In its letter dated August 21, 2025, Reclamation announced that, in accordance with the 2007 Interim Guidelines,<sup>4</sup> Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River will operate in a Tier 1 Shortage Condition in CY 2026. In addition, the 2019 *Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan Agreement* will also govern the operation of Lake Mead for CY 2026. The CY 2026 lower Colorado River Shortage Condition will not reduce the volume of Colorado River water available to the state of California in CY 2026. Additionally, no Drought Contingency Plan Contributions are required by California in CY 2026.

Based upon the Shortage Condition determination, a review of the CY 2026 consumptive use estimate provided by CVWD, the terms of the CRWDA, the Letter Agreement, the SCIA, and the information gathered during Reclamation's Part 417 consultation, I approve CVWD to consumptively use up to 377,489 AF in CY 2026. Of this amount, up to 362,489 AF will be delivered to CVWD via Imperial Dam and an estimated 15,000 AF will be delivered to CVWD by MWD via the CRA. The table below provides the factors used to develop CVWD's approved consumptive use for CY 2026.

<b>Water Budget Factor</b>	<b>Amount (AF)</b>
Priority 3a Consumptive Use Cap	330,000
Creation of System Conservation Water (SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0764, as amended) <sup>5</sup>	(35,000)
Creation of System Conservation Water (SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0821) <sup>5</sup>	(6,511)
Coachella Canal Lining Project (CCLP) Conserved Water	(30,850)
Present Perfected Right Holders and Others <sup>5</sup>	(3,000)
CCLP Conserved Water for Mitigation <sup>6</sup>	4,850
Intra-Priority Transfer to CVWD from Imperial Irrigation District (IID) (IID-CVWD Acquisition Agreement)	103,000
MWD/CVWD State Water Project Water Exchange	0
<b>Total Approved Consumptive Use for Delivery via Imperial Dam</b>	<b>362,489</b>
1988 IID/MWD Conservation Agreement/1989 Approval Agreement – Delivered by MWD via the CRA <sup>7</sup>	15,000
<b>Total Approved Consumptive Use</b>	<b>377,489</b>

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/24mo/>.

<sup>4</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>5</sup> Value shown is subject to change based on final accounting.

<sup>6</sup> Value shown is subject to change based on CVWD's final mitigation water use report.

<sup>7</sup> Deliveries made pursuant to the terms of the Letter Agreement and the Second Amended Exchange Agreement. Actual delivery amount will be determined by MWD.

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 2026 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 2026 diversions and consumptive use of Colorado River water and will make these projections available daily on Reclamation's website<sup>9</sup> beginning January 2026. 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 CVWD's water order for CY 2026. Should you have questions, please contact Kerim Dickson, Team Lead, Water Accounting and Verification Group, at (725) 232-6443 or [kdickson@usbr.gov](mailto:kdickson@usbr.gov). Individuals who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunication relay services.

Sincerely,

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Acting Regional Director

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<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>.