



# 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

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

Subject: Approval of Calendar Year (CY) 2026 Colorado River Water Order – The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)

Dear Mr. Deshmukh:

The Bureau of Reclamation received MWD's CY 2026 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 2026.

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.

On August 15, 2025, Reclamation released its Colorado River Basin August 2025 24-Month Study,<sup>1</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>2</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 (LB DCP 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 approved water orders of higher priority California entitlement holders, Reclamation estimates that, of California's Colorado River basic apportionment of 4.4 million AF, 892,893 AF of Colorado River water will be available for consumptive use by MWD in CY 2026.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

INTERIOR REGION 8 • LOWER COLORADO BASIN

ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA\*, NEVADA\*

\* PARTIAL

Taking into consideration this estimate, a review of MWD’s CY 2026 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 892,893 AF of Colorado River water by MWD during CY 2026. This consumptive use approval results in an estimated Colorado River water diversion of 895,693 AF. I also approve MWD to divert any unused California basic apportionment of Colorado River water in CY 2026, to the extent such water becomes available.

The table below provides the factors used to develop MWD’s approved consumptive use for CY 2026.

<b>Water Budget Factor</b>	<b>Reclamation Approved Amount (AF)</b>
Priority 4 Water	550,000
1988 Imperial Irrigation District (IID)-MWD Water Conservation Program	105,000
Coachella Canal Lining Project (CCLP) (MWD exchange with San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA))	21,500
CCLP (Supplemental Water delivered to the San Luis Ray Settlement Parties)	4,500
All-American Canal (AAC) Lining Project (MWD exchange with SDCWA)	56,200
AAC 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 <sup>3,4</sup>	80,008
Unused Priority 3a <sup>4,5</sup>	0
Miscellaneous and Indian Present Perfected Rights <sup>4</sup>	(12,308)
Lower Colorado Water Supply Project <sup>4</sup>	8,976
System Conservation Water – City of Needles (SCIA No. 15-XX-30-W0596) <sup>4</sup>	(145)
System Conservation Water – PVID/MWD Fallowing Program (SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0772, as amended) <sup>4</sup>	(119,338)
System Conservation Water – Quechan Indian Tribe (SCIA No. 23-XX-30-W0783, as amended)	(13,000)
<b>Total Approved Consumptive Use</b>	<b>892,893</b>
<b>Estimated Returns</b>	<b>2,800</b>
<b>Total Approved Diversion</b>	<b>895,693</b>

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.

<sup>3</sup> Amount shown does not yet incorporate System Conservation Water to be created in CY 2026 by Bard Water District pursuant to System Conservation Implementation Agreement (SCIA) No. 23-XX-30-W0773, as amended.

<sup>4</sup> The amount shown is subject to change based on final accounting records.

<sup>5</sup> System Conservation Water created by IID pursuant to SCIA No. 24-XX-30-W0825 and the Coachella Valley Water District pursuant to SCIA Nos. 23-XX-30-W0764, as amended and 23-XX-30-W0821 will remain in Lake Mead to benefit system storage.

(2) MWD may use information from Reclamation’s daily water use forecast<sup>6</sup> 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 2026. The actual amount of EC ICS creation by MWD in CY 2026 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 Agreement<sup>7</sup> and will be based on final accounting. Should MWD elect to take delivery of ICS during CY 2026, MWD is required to request such delivery through means of a revised water order.

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 during CY 2026 and will make these projections available daily on Reclamation’s website<sup>6</sup> beginning in 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 MWD’s Colorado River 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,

Genevieve R. Johnson  
Acting Regional Director

cc: See next page.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/hourly/forecast.pdf>.

<sup>7</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>8</sup> Available at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/IOPP.pdf>.

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