

Alert | Water Law



May 2023

Federal Government Continues Efforts to Reform Colorado River Operations

The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) is seeking public comments on new strategies to replace the 2007 Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and the Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead that will expire at the end of 2026. Building on the [Lower Colorado Basin States' compromise of May 22, 2023](#), under which California, Arizona, and Nevada agreed to voluntarily conserve three million acre-feet of water over the next three years, [DOI began a public process on June 15, 2023](#), to attempt to “modernize” the way Colorado River water is distributed.

Years of severe drought, developing climate change, and a historic over-estimation of the amount of water available compel a new look at the Colorado River Compact of 1922, which provides for annual water allocations to the Upper and Lower Basins, and at a 1944 treaty, under which Colorado River water is delivered to Mexico. DOI will host three virtual public meetings/webinars to provide summary information and receive oral comments in July 2023. See the above link for more information.

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