



International Boundary and Water Commission United States and Mexico

For immediate release
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2026 COLORADO RIVER WATER ALLOCATIONS ANNOUNCED FOR THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Today, the Bureau of Reclamation released the August 2025 24-Month Study, which determines the distribution of volumes of Colorado River water under low-elevation reservoir conditions for 2026.

This study projects a January 1, 2026, elevation of 1,055.88 feet at Lake Mead, where water is stored for delivery to the Lower Basin States in the United States (Arizona, California and Nevada) and to Mexico.

Colorado River water allocations to users in the United States and Mexico will be reduced in 2026, under agreements signed by both countries and in accordance with Bureau of Reclamation projections of elevation levels at Lake Mead, which stores water for delivery to the U.S. Lower Basin States (Arizona, California, and Nevada) and Mexico.

Based on the 1944 Water Treaty, and in compliance with the provisions of Minutes 323 and 330 of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC), signed in 2017 and 2024, respectively, Mexico's initial annual Colorado River allocation in 2026 will be 1,352,595 acre-feet (1,668.4 million cubic meters [mcm]).

This reflects a reduction of 50,000 acre-feet (62 mcm) and a contribution of 30,000 acre-feet (37 mcm) of recoverable water savings in accordance with Minute 323. Additionally, Mexico will generate at least 67,000 acre-feet (82.6 mcm) under a water conservation program established by Minute 330.

In 2026, U.S. Lower Basin users will have a reduction of 333,000 acre-feet (411 mcm) and water savings contributions of 200,000 acre-feet (247 mcm), with approximately 770,000 acre-feet (951 mcm) of additional water being saved under a conservation plan adopted in 2024. This means that in 2026, Lower Basin users in the United States will have a combined total reduction and water savings of approximately 1,300,000 acre-feet (1,604 mcm).

Minute 330 establishes a complementary water conservation program for 2023-2026 of 400,000 acre-feet (493.396 mcm) by Mexico, in addition to the volumes already identified in Minute 323. During this same period, the United States is undertaking a water conservation program of approximately 3 million acre-feet (3,700 mcm) of additional conservation.

In accordance with Minute 323, both countries reduce the use of their annual Colorado River water allocation when the January 1 Lake Mead elevation is projected to be at or below 1,075

feet. This is in addition to the agreements to undertake water savings (when the elevation is 1,090 feet or below), which will be recoverable when reservoir conditions improve.

The agreements reached for water conservation, reduced allocations, and recoverable savings are a result of United States-Mexico Colorado River cooperation since 2007. These agreements reflect a shared commitment from the governments and stakeholders in both countries to work proactively to address the potential for unprecedented reductions on the Colorado River.

U.S. and Mexican water managers will continue meeting with the goal of identifying potential future actions to address the effects of prolonged scarcity in the basin.

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Links:

Reclamation announces 2026 operating conditions for Lake Powell and Lake Mead:

<https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/news-release/5211>

Minute 323: <https://www.ibwc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Min323.pdf>

Minute 330: <https://www.ibwc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Minute-330-English-Spanish-Version-Signed-Clean.pdf>