



# Colorado River Board of California

December 30, 2025

## NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** pursuant to the call of the Chairman, J.B. Hamby that a regular meeting of the members of the Board is to be held as follows:

### Board Meeting

Date: Friday, January 9, 2026

Time: **10:00 AM**

Place: Orion Room  
Classic Club  
75200 Classic Club Blvd  
Palm Desert, CA 92211

The Colorado River Board of California welcomes any comments from members of the public pertaining to items included on this agenda and related topics. Members of the public may provide comments in the following ways: (1) Oral comments can be provided at the beginning of each board meeting; and (2) Public comments may be submitted by email, addressed to the board's Chairman, J.B. Hamby, at [crb@crb.ca.gov](mailto:crb@crb.ca.gov) and will be accepted up until 5:00 p.m. on January 7, 2026.

If accommodations for individuals with disabilities are required, such persons should provide a request at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting by email to board staff at [crb@crb.ca.gov](mailto:crb@crb.ca.gov).

Requests for additional information may be directed to: Ms. Jessica Neuwerth, Executive Director, Colorado River Board of California, 770 Fairmont Avenue, Suite 100, Glendale, CA 91203-1068. A copy of this Notice and Agenda may be found on the Colorado River Board's web page at [crb.ca.gov/meetings](http://crb.ca.gov/meetings).

A copy of the meeting agenda, showing the matters to be considered and transacted, is attached.



# Colorado River Board of California

## REGULAR MEETING AGENDA Friday, January 9, 2026 — 10:00 AM

At the discretion of the Board, all items appearing on this agenda, whether or not expressly listed for action, may be deliberated upon and may be subject to action by the Board. Items may not necessarily be taken up in the order shown.

### CALL TO ORDER

### PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 minutes.)

### REPORTS

1. Water Supply and Operations Report
2. Colorado River Basin Programs Report
3. Executive Director's Report

### DISCUSSION/ACTION

4. Member Agency and Public Member Reports

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT (Pursuant to California Water Code § 12528)

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

5. Discuss interstate claims to the use of Colorado River system waters in judicial proceedings, administrative proceedings, and/or negotiations with representatives from the other Basin states or federal government. (Wat. Code, § 12519)

### FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

### ADJOURNMENT

#### Next Scheduled Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026  
Time: 10:00 AM  
Place: Ontario, CA





January 6, 2025  
Information

## WATER SUPPLY AND OPERATIONS REPORTS

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### Highlights

- As of January 4, precipitation is at or above normal in both the Upper and Lower Basins. However, due to above-average temperatures, snowpack is below average at 72% of normal in the Upper Basin and 56% of normal in the Lower Basin.
- For CY-2025, total forecasted Lower Basin water use is currently 5.78 MAF, which is the second lowest use in recent history. California's projected water use for WY-2025 is 3.66 MAF, the lowest since at least 1949.

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### Basin Report (as of January 4, 2026)

#### Precipitation Conditions

In December 2025, precipitation conditions were much below average for most of the Basin with the exception of the Green, Yampa, and Virgin River basins. In December, below normal snow water equivalent (SWE) conditions continued to persist throughout the Basin.

During the first week of January 2026, precipitation conditions improved basinwide. To date, Upper Colorado Basin precipitation is 103% of normal and SWE is 72% of normal. In the Lower Colorado Basin, precipitation conditions have been mixed, with below average conditions in parts of southern Arizona and above average conditions in southern Nevada and northern and central Arizona. To date, precipitation is 188% of normal and SWE is 56% of normal. In both basins, although precipitation is at or above normal, snowpack is below average due to warmer-than-average conditions during the first three months of the water year.

#### Reservoir Conditions

The water surface elevation of Lake Powell was 3,539.69 feet, with nearly 6.43 million acre-feet (MAF) of storage, or 28% of capacity. The water surface elevation of Lake Mead was 1,062.24 feet, with 8.62 MAF of storage, or 33% of capacity. The total system storage

was 21.98 MAF, or 38% of capacity, which was about 2.49 million acre-feet (MAF) less than the total System storage at this time last year.

For WY-2026, the forecasted inflow into Lake Powell is 7.04 MAF, or 73% of normal and the forecasted April to July Spring runoff into Lake Powell is 4.2 MAF, or 66% of normal.

The storage volumes of Fontelle and Flaming Gorge reservoirs in the Upper Basin were 56% and 82% of capacity, respectively. The storage volumes of Morrow Point, Blue Mesa, and Navajo reservoirs were 98%, 50%, and 60% of capacity, respectively.

**Table 1: Reservoir Storage (as of January 4, 2026)**

	<b>Volume (MAF)</b>	<b>Elevation (ft)</b>	<b>% of Capacity</b>
<b>Lake Powell</b>	6.43	3,519.99	28
<b>Lake Mead</b>	8.62	1,062.56	33
<b>Total System Storage</b>	21.98	-	38

2Source: [Lower Colorado Weekly Hydrologic Update: January 4, 2026](#)

**Table 3: Lake Powell Inflows**

<b>Water Year</b>	<b>Unregulated Inflow</b>		<b>April to July Inflow</b>	
	Volume (MAF)	% of normal	Volume (MAF)	% of normal
<b>2026*</b>	7.04	73%	4.2	66%
<b>2025</b>	4.69	49%	2.63	41%
<b>2024</b>	7.98	83%	5.33	82%
<b>2023</b>	13.42	140%	10.62	166%

\*Forecasted as of 01/04/2026

### Lower Basin and Mexico Water Use – CY-2025

As of January 2, 2026, the Calendar Year 2025 (CY-2025) preliminary water use-to date for Arizona, California and Nevada was 1.93 MAF, 3.66 MAF, and 0.199 MAF, respectively. The preliminary use-to-date was 5.78 MAF, which was the second lowest use in history, and California's forecasted water use is the lowest since at least 1949.

**Table 4: Lower Basin and Mexico Water Use (as of January 2, 2026)**

<b>Calendar Year 2025</b>	<b>Use to Date (AF)</b>	<b>Forecasted Use (AF)</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	1,926,219	1,926,219
<b>California</b>	3,655,363	3,655,363
<b>Nevada</b>	198,635	198,635
<b>Lower Basin Total</b>	<b>5,780,217</b>	<b>5,780,217</b>
<b>Total Deliveries to Mexico</b>	1,481,404	1,450,000

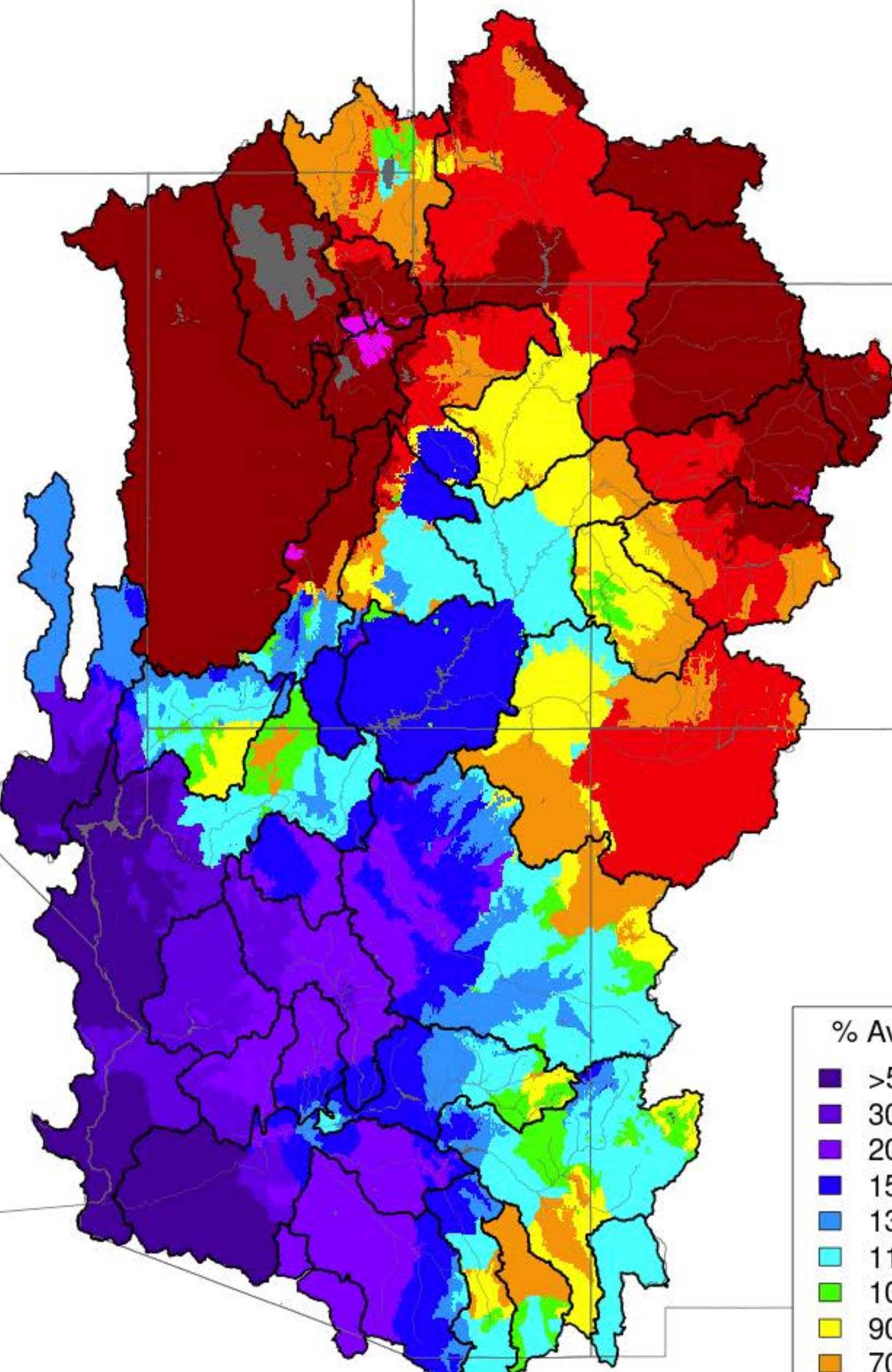
Source: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/hourly/forecast.pdf>

### Regulatory Flows and Excess Flows to Mexico – CY 2025 Provisional Year to Date Totals

Through the end of December, Brock and Senator reservoirs have captured 119,067 AF and 73,047 AF, respectively. Excess flows to Mexico were 13,762 AF, compared to 18,555 AF last year at this time. As of January 2, 2026, saline drainage bypass to the Cienga de Santa Clara was 140,743 AF for CY 2025.

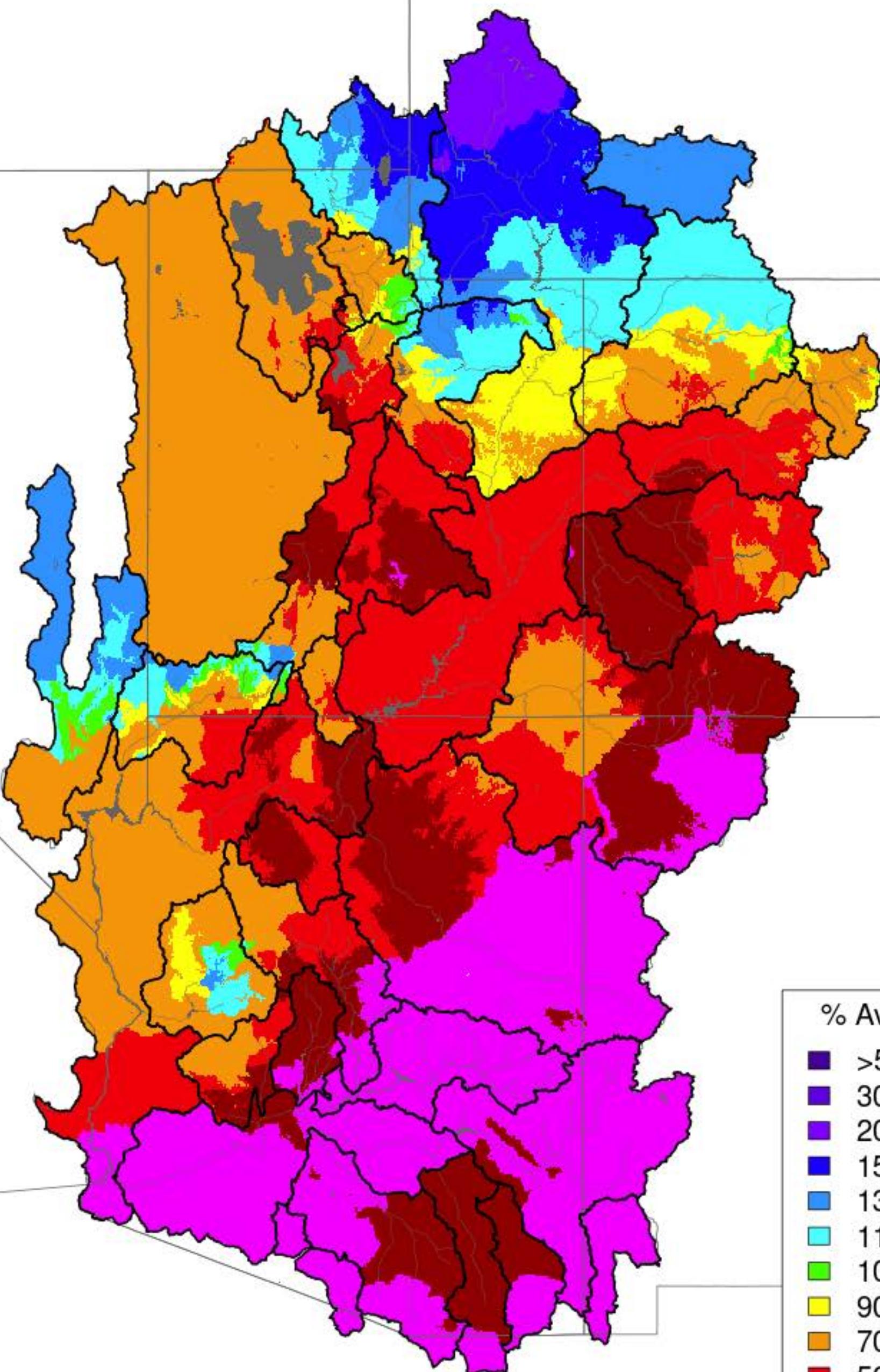
# Monthly Precipitation - November 2025

Averaged by Basin



# Monthly Precipitation - December 2025

Averaged by Basin

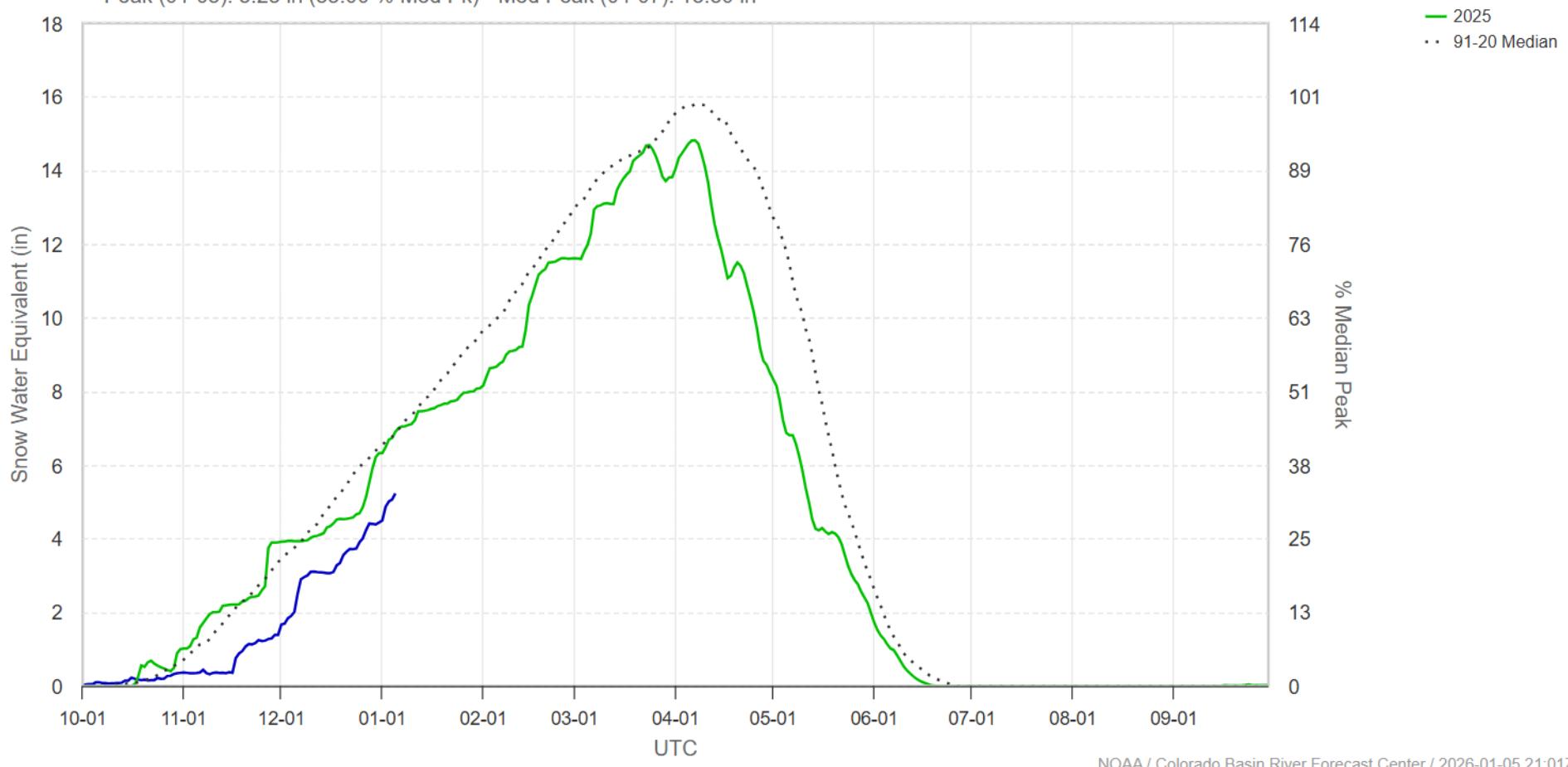


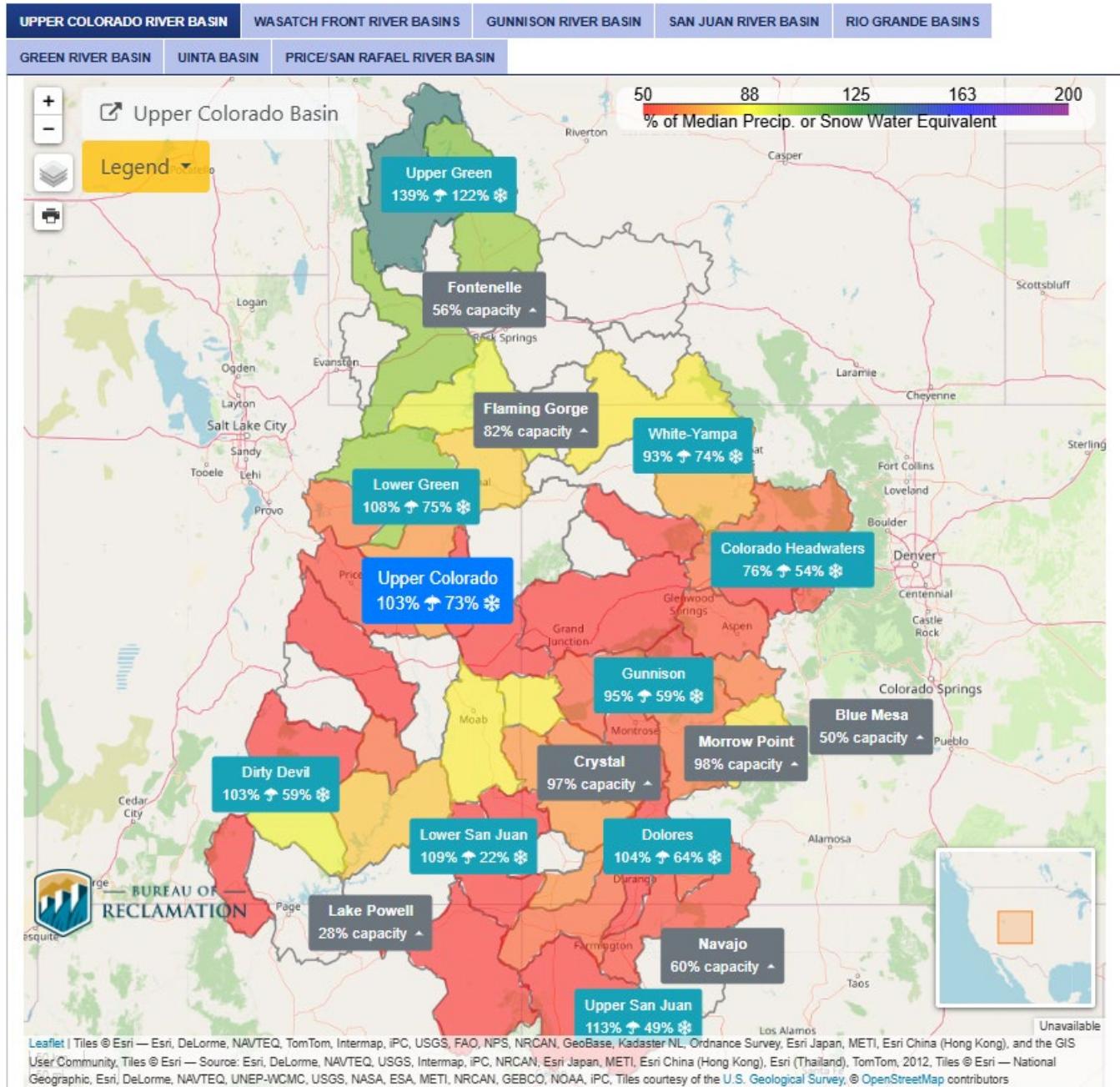
## Lake Powell - longrecord - Group SNOTEL Plot

70 sites

Ob (01-05): 5.23 in, 76% Med - Rate (in/dy): 0.12 (3-day), 0.12 (week)

Peak (01-05): 5.23 in (33.00 % Med Pk) - Med Peak (04-07): 15.80 in



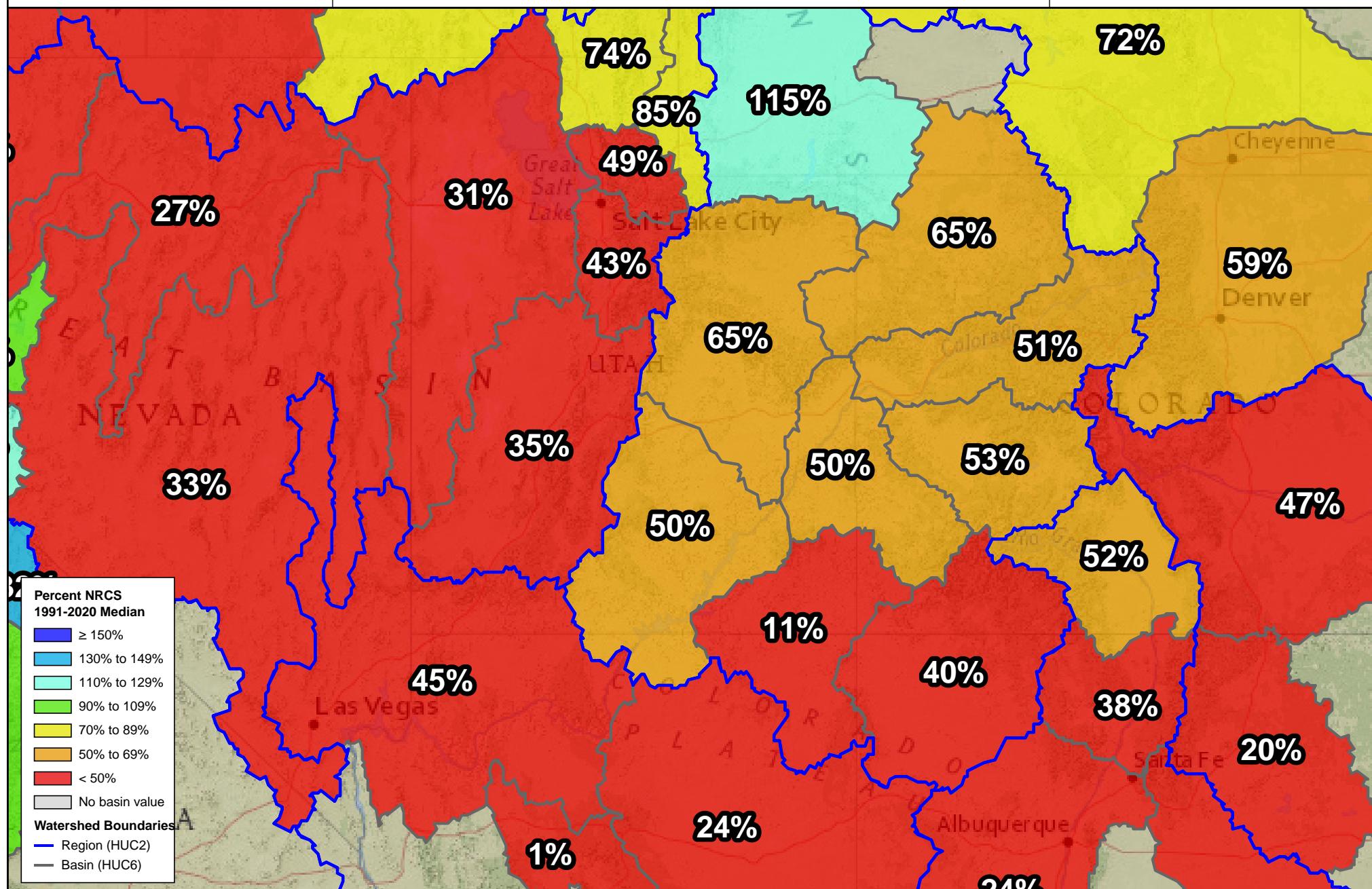


January 5, 2026

Snow Water Equivalent

Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median

1st, 2026



Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
United States Department of Agriculture

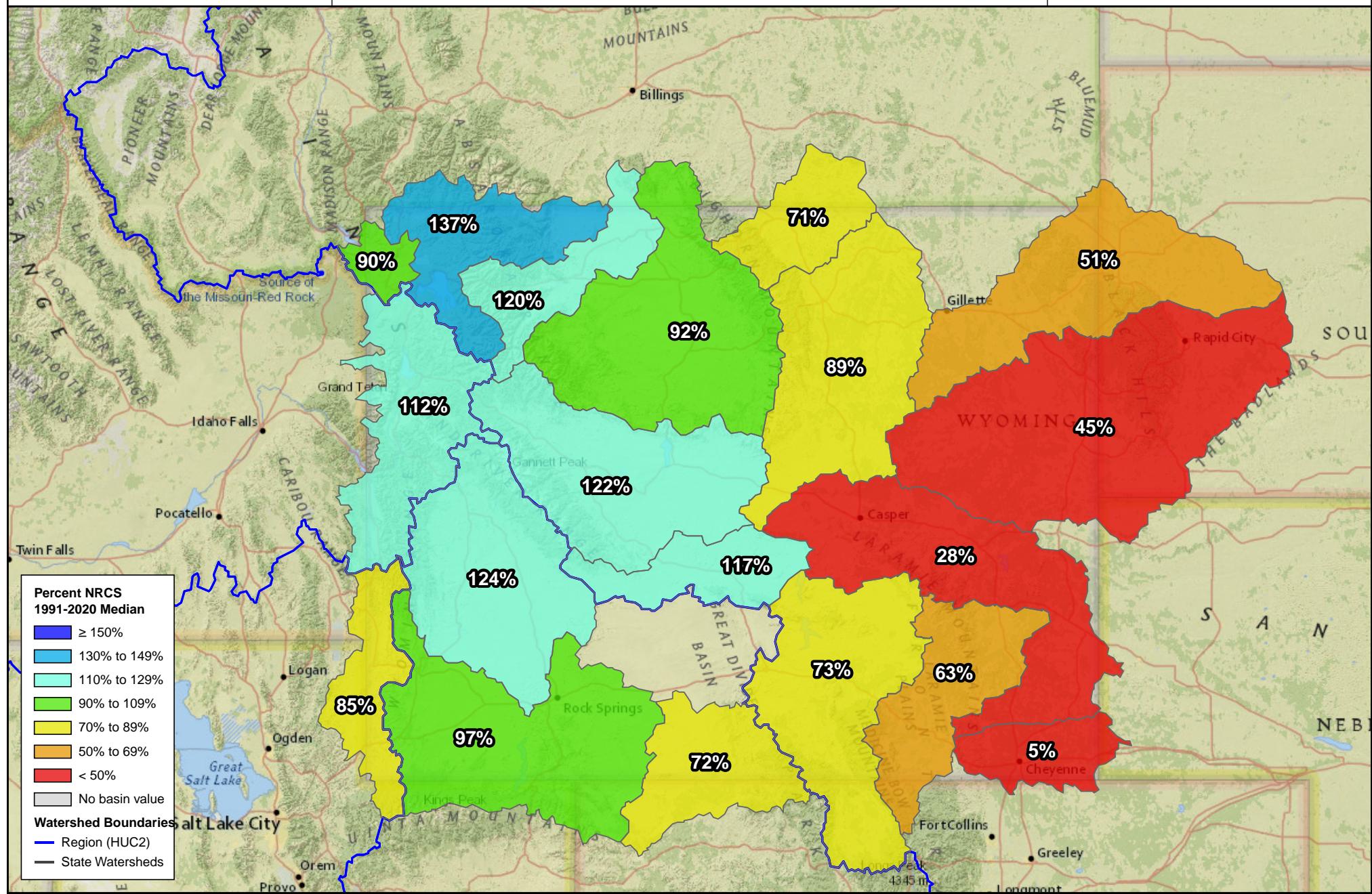
0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180 Miles

Created 1-06-2026

Snow Water Equivalent

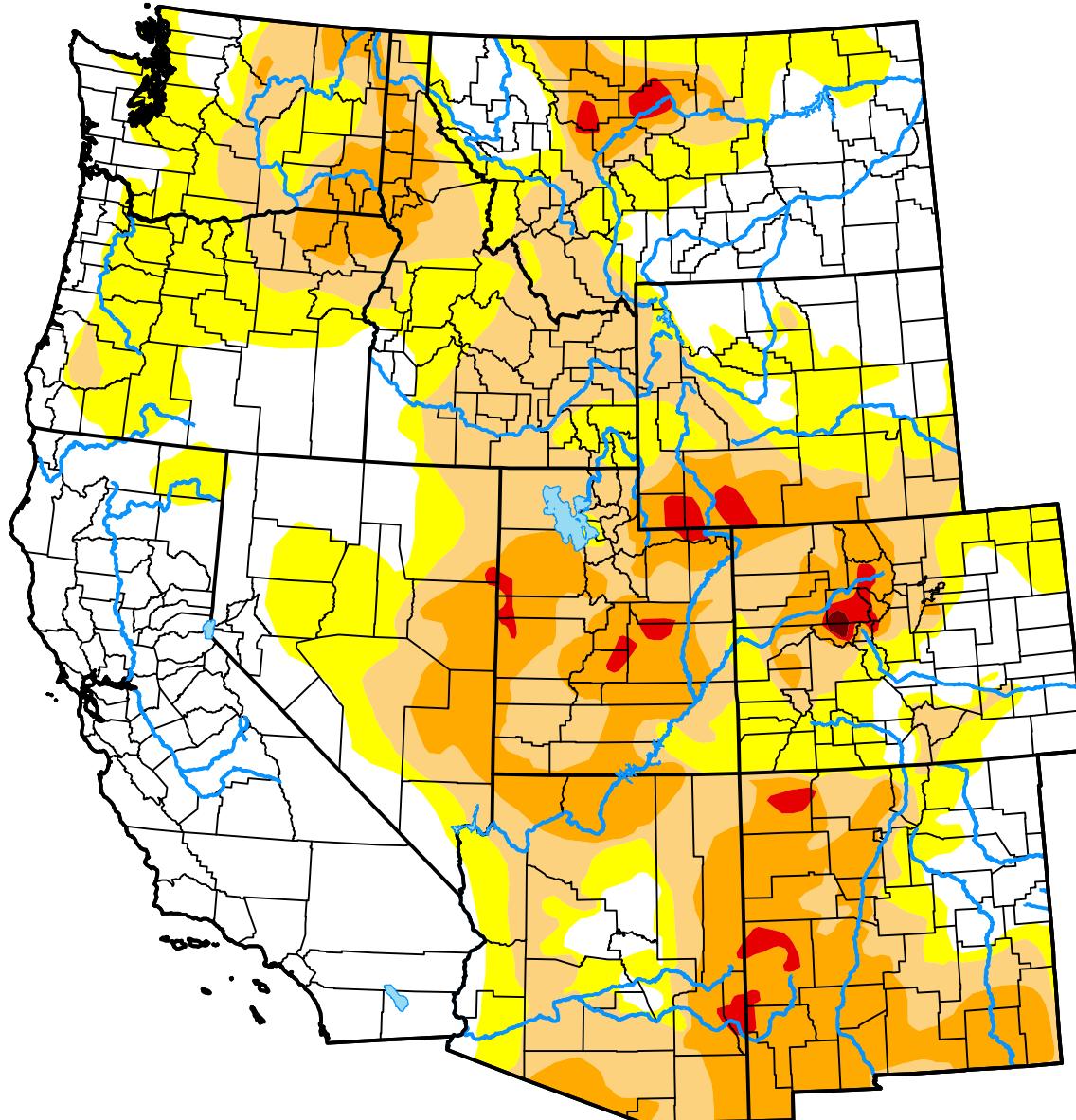
Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median

1st, 2026



# U.S. Drought Monitor

## West



December 30, 2025  
(Released Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

### Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	35.59	64.41	41.04	18.59	1.33	0.05
Last Week 12-23-2025	31.66	68.34	44.23	19.68	1.81	0.05
3 Months Ago 09-30-2025	18.15	81.85	64.82	44.12	12.00	0.69
Start of Calendar Year 01-07-2025	32.22	67.78	39.02	20.30	6.87	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	18.15	81.85	64.82	44.12	12.00	0.69
One Year Ago 12-31-2024	29.66	70.34	39.86	19.17	6.85	0.00

### Intensity:

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

### Author:

Rocky Bilotta  
NCEI/NOAA



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)





January 6, 2026  
Information

## COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS REPORT

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### Highlights

- Fewer non-native fish were captured below Glen Canyon Dam in 2025 than over the same time period in 2024. However, a comparison between the two time periods is hindered by reduced monitoring efforts in 2025.
- The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) is working to update Endangered Species Act (ESA) and California Endangered Species Act (CESA) coverage in coordination with the ongoing process to develop guidelines for river operations after 2026.

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### Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

The Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCDAMP) Technical Work Group (TWG) held a virtual meeting on November 11.

#### Efforts to Minimize the Likelihood of Establishment of High-Risk Invasive Fish

The GCDAMP continues to focus on minimizing the likelihood of the establishment of warmwater high-risk invasive fish species below Glen Canyon Dam. These efforts are guided by the strategic plan, “Invasive Fish Below Glen Canyon Dam: A Strategic Plan to Prevent, Detect, and Respond,” adopted by the AMWG on February 16, 2023.

The 2025 Cool Mix Flow Experiment ended on October 20. The goal of the experiment was to reduce breeding of smallmouth bass and other high-risk invasive species by releasing colder water through the dam’s bypass tubes. The 2025 experiment was initiated on August 1 and was conducted for 72 days. The 2024 experiment ran from July 9 to November 18 (132 days). The cost to purchase replacement power during the experiments due to releasing water through the bypass tubes was \$19.1 million in 2024 and \$6.5 million in 2025.

The U.S. Geological Survey Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC) reported that as of November 11, 38 smallmouth bass had been captured below Glen

Canyon Dam in 2025 through coordinated efforts of GCMRC, National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Arizona Department of Game and Fish. For comparison, 254 smallmouth bass had been captured over the same time period in 2024. The furthest downstream capture of smallmouth bass in 2025 as of November 11 was river mile 5.26. The furthest downstream capture of smallmouth bass since monitoring was initiated in 2022 is a juvenile captured at river mile 16.38 in 2023.

Other high-risk non-native fish captures in 2025 as of November 11 included: 3,240 green sunfish, 289 brown trout, 176 bluegill, 35 walleye, and 8 striped bass. With the exception of striped bass, all high-risk non-native captures were lower in 2025 than 2024. The furthest downstream captures of green sunfish in both 2024 and 2025 were near river mile 250.

Sampling effort was reduced in 2025 compared to 2024 due to the federal government shutdown. The reduced sampling likely hindered detection of any smallmouth bass that potentially spawned earlier in 2025 as well as detection of adults in spawning condition after the 2025 Cool Mix flow was terminated.

#### *Dragon Bravo Fire*

The NPS provided an update regarding the Dragon Bravo Fire. The fire was initiated by lightning strike on July 4 and burned until September 28. More than 140,000 acres of National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service land were impacted, including the loss of 106 structures and critical utilities.

Post-fire hydrological risks identified include risks to drinking water due to persistent contaminants on the North Rim as well as increased risk of higher magnitude flash flooding and debris flows than in pre-fire conditions. The NPS and GCMRC have completed reconnaissance monitoring of native fish in tributaries impacted by the fire.

#### *10-Year Program Review*

The GCDAMP is preparing for a 10-year program review as required by the Long Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP). As part of this review, the GCDAMP will be holding knowledge assessment workshops throughout 2025 to review what has been learned during the first 10 years of LTEMP and to guide future adaptive management efforts.

The GCDAMP Annual Reporting meeting is scheduled for February 3-4, followed by a TWG meeting on February 5. The GCDAMP Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG)

is scheduled to hold a meeting from February 25-26. The location of these meetings has not yet been finalized. Virtual attendance options will be provided.

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## **Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program**

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) Technical Work Group (TWG) held a hybrid meeting with in-person attendance in Las Vegas, NV on December 16.

### Potential Post-2026 Updates to LCR MSCP

The LCR MSCP TWG is working to update the LCR MSCP's Endangered Species Act (ESA) and California Endangered Species Act (CESA) coverage in coordination with the ongoing process to develop guidelines for river operations after 2026. The timeline for potential revisions to the LCR MSCP is guided by the post-2026 process and anticipated increased water conservation efforts.

Items currently in progress include:

- The LCR MSCP is working to refine a list of species that may need to be included in a new or revised permit.
- The LCR MSCP TWG received updates on ongoing data collection efforts to support potential post-2026 updates to the environmental baseline incorporated in the Habitat Conservation Plan. As part of this effort, Reclamation is currently analyzing data to update the vegetation baseline to assess the extent of vegetation cover types and changes that can be measured. In addition, Reclamation is updating the hydrologic modeling utilized in developing the LCR MSCP.
- The LCR MSCP is working to refine a draft version of the Purpose and Need for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) based on preliminary feedback from the non-federal parties and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The LCR MSCP is developing a Native American consultation process and schedule.

### Legislation

Congress is considering bills H.R. 831 and S.291. The bills comprise the current effort to establish an interest-bearing account for non-federal contributions to the LCR MSCP. In accordance with the LCR MSCP's Funding and Management Agreement, non-federal permittees contribute funds on an annual basis. The funds are retained until needed for

program implementation. Establishing an interest-bearing account would help maintain the value of these funds and protect against inflation until the funds are needed.

The LCR MSCP TWG is scheduled to hold a virtual meeting on January 21.

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## **Hazardous Waste Remediation**

The Board submitted a letter to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency supporting comments submitted by The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) and the Central Arizona Project regarding a remedial investigation report submitted by the Nevada Environmental Response Trust (NERT) on June 26, 2025. Through the letter, the Board requested that monitoring and clean-up efforts at Operational Unit 3 (OU-3) on the NERT site ensure protection of downstream water such that water quality standards promulgated in California are achieved. The NERT was established in February 2011 and became the owner of a property near Henderson, NV while it performs its purpose to remediate historical legacy contamination. More information regarding the NERT site can be found at: <https://ndep.nv.gov/environmental-cleanup/black-mountain-industrial-bmi-complex/nevada-environmental-response-trust-nert>. A copy of the letter is included in the Board packet.

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James (JD) Dotchin  
Chief, Bureau of Industrial Site Cleanup  
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
375 E. Warm Springs Road, Suite 200  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119  
[jdotchin@ndep.nv.gov](mailto:jdotchin@ndep.nv.gov)

Lauren Brandt  
Physical Scientist, Underground Storage Tanks Program  
Land, Chemicals & Redevelopment Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street (LND-4-3)  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
[brandt.lauren@epa.gov](mailto:brandt.lauren@epa.gov)

December 5, 2025

Dear Mr. Dotchin and Ms. Brandt:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide feedback regarding the Remedial Investigation Report for Operational Unit 3 (OU-3) by the Nevada Environmental Response Trust (NERT) submitted to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) on June 26, 2025.

The Colorado River Board of California (Colorado River Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. The Colorado River Board consists of eight members that are appointed by the Governor, including six representing water agencies and two members of the public, as well as the Directors of the California Department of Water Resources and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Colorado River Board supports the comments submitted by The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) and the Central Arizona Project. In particular, the Colorado River Board requests that monitoring and clean-up efforts at OU-3 ensure protection of downstream water such that water quality standards promulgated in California are achieved and that water entering California from the NERT site does not necessitate additional remediation within California.

In order to ensure protection of downstream waters, the Colorado River Board supports the recommendation by Metropolitan that NDEP, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and

NERT coordinate with California's Regional Water Quality Control Boards, in particular the [Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board](#), to ensure that NERT's remediation actions will protect the beneficial uses of downstream groundwater basins and surface water bodies.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Please reach out to Shana Rapoport, Environmental Program Manager, at [srapoport@crb.ca.gov](mailto:srapoport@crb.ca.gov) or 818-254-3210 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Jessica Neuwerth  
Executive Director

cc:

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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### Highlights

- The Basin States missed a November 11 deadline to reach consensus on Post-2026 operations. The Department of Interior has set a new deadline of February 14.
- A Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Post-2026 operations will be released in January, which will not identify a preferred alternative. A Final EIS and Record of Decision for future operations must be completed by late summer or early fall of 2026, to guide operations starting October 1, 2026.

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### Basin States Process

The Colorado River Basin States missed a November 11 deadline to reach agreement on key terms for post-2026 operations. Ongoing discussions continue to focus on Lower Basin reductions, Upper Basin contributions, Lower Basin storage, releases from Lake Powell, and releases from the Upper Initial Units of the Colorado River Storage Project. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has extended the deadline for the Basin States to finalize the details of a consensus proposal to February 14, to allow sufficient time for analysis in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for post-2026 operations. Current negotiations are largely focused on operational terms for an initial five-year period after 2026, with longer-term provisions to be addressed if agreement can be reached on the near-term framework.

In December, Secretary of the Interior Burgum invited the Colorado River Basin governors and their representatives to Washington, D.C. to discuss the status of negotiations. Although the meeting was ultimately cancelled due to scheduling challenges, Governors Lombardo (Nevada), Cox (Utah), and Gordon (Wyoming) sent letters to Secretary Burgum affirming their states' commitment to achieving a seven-state solution. Interior is working to reschedule the meeting for late January.

A Draft EIS is expected in January 2026 and is not anticipated to identify a preferred alternative. The Draft EIS will likely include a "natural flow" proposal as the Basin States alternative, reflecting a snapshot of negotiations at the time the alternatives were finalized. Under this approach, each basin would receive a fixed percentage of the

available supply, with supply calculated based on the preceding three years of hydrology. The Basin States were unable to reach agreement on the appropriate percentage allocations between the Upper and Lower Basins.

A Final EIS is expected in summer 2026 and will include either a Basin States consensus alternative or a federal alternative in its place. A Record of Decision must be completed by no later than September 2026, to guide operations at Lake Powell beginning October 1, 2026, and at Lake Mead beginning January 1, 2027.

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## **Washington, D.C. Report**

### Appropriations

The current Continuing Resolution (CR) is set to expire on January 30, 2026. This date marks the end of the temporary funding provided by the CR, requiring Congress to either pass a new appropriations bill or enact another CR to avoid a government shutdown. Significant partisan divisions continue to impact the appropriations process, with Democrats and Republicans often differing on spending levels and priorities. Efforts to negotiate a bipartisan budget agreement are ongoing but face challenges due to differing views on taxes and overall government spending.

### Permitting Reform

Before adjourning for the year, the House passed broad permitting legislation, which may become part of a broader package lawmakers hope to pass this Congress. The House voted for Chair Bruce Westerman's (R-Ark.) "Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act," H.R. 4776. Notable provisions include the following:

- Agencies are only required to consider effects proximately caused by the project (not speculative or distant impacts).
- Sets hard deadlines:
  - 1 year for Environmental Assessments (EAs)
  - 2 years for Environmental Impact Statements (EISs)
  - Extensions allowed only with project proponent's approval
- Programmatic documents: Valid for 10 years, up from 5.

- New science: Agencies are not required to consider new research after a project's NEPA review has been initiated.
- Courts can only overturn agency actions if the agency abused its discretion and it changed the outcome.
- No vacatur or injunctions: Courts cannot halt projects—only remand for corrections, with a 180-day deadline.
- Lawsuits must be filed within 150 days of the final agency action, down from 6 years.
- “Major Federal Action” - Excludes actions where federal involvement is limited (e.g., grants, loan guarantees).
- “Reasonably foreseeable effects” - Must have a close causal connection to the project; speculative or unrelated future effects are excluded.
- Encourages use and sharing of categorical exclusions.
- Courts must resolve NEPA-related lawsuits within 180 days, appeals within 60 days.

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1 STATE OF NEVADA WAY  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89119-4339  
OFFICE: (702) 486-2500  
FAX NO.: (702) 486-2505

# Office of the Governor

December 9, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

**SUBJECT: Statement from Nevada on Colorado River Negotiations**

Dear Secretary Burgum:

Thank you for inviting the Colorado River Basin governors and state negotiators to Washington this week. Although the meeting did not proceed as planned, I appreciate the Department's commitment to advancing these discussions and expanding engagement at a time when the risks of inaction continue to grow.

The challenges we face are significant and addressing them requires urgency and a shared commitment to continued dialogue. Nevada, along with our partners in the Lower Basin, stands ready to participate constructively. While resolving this issue remains a top priority for me, durable solutions only emerge when all voices remain at the table. Sustained engagement in the weeks ahead is essential.

For over two decades, Nevada has shown that responsible water management and economic growth are compatible. We have implemented some of the nation's most effective water conservation policies and programs, and our planning serves as a model for other water-challenged communities. We recognize the difficulty of the decisions ahead and remain ready to act, but no amount of local success can substitute for the actions required across the entire basin.

A seven-state agreement remains the preferred path. Achieving that outcome will require continued federal leadership, clear direction, firm timelines and the expectation that all parties will stay engaged until we reach an equitable and lasting outcome. I would welcome the opportunity for governors and negotiators to reconvene and respectfully request that you and your staff consider rescheduling the meeting for early January.

Nevada stands ready to do its part. We are committed to collaboration, to action and to a future where every community in the Basin can rely on a safe and resilient water supply. I appreciate your leadership and look forward to working together in the weeks and months ahead.

Sincerely,



Joe Lombardo  
Governor

cc: Southern Nevada Water Authority



Dec. 11, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

The Colorado River Basin has reached a critical moment. With the February 14 deadline for a seven-state agreement approaching, the Department of the Interior must decide whether to reaffirm its commitment to a state-led settlement or pursue unilateral federal action that would trigger years of litigation and destabilize basin management.

Utah is fully committed to a seven-state agreement. We will continue to meet our 1922 Compact obligations, invest state resources in voluntary conservation, and work toward a durable post-2026 operating framework. This path is only viable if all basin states negotiate in good faith.

As Utah's elected leaders, we are concerned that some of our sister states appear to be preparing for failure. Some seem to be positioning for litigation or signaling a preference for judicial intervention while others seem to be inviting a federally imposed outcome. In our view, assuming a litigated outcome or shifting decision-making authority to federal actors puts the entire basin in jeopardy.

A federal mandate is not a viable solution. Any unilateral action by the Bureau of Reclamation would face immediate legal challenges from states, tribes, water users, and environmental organizations. Likewise, prolonged litigation would paralyze basin operations and cost all parties unimaginable amounts of money. Only a negotiated settlement offers lasting legal durability, operational certainty, and shared ownership.

For Utah, the risks are immediate and substantial. Roughly 27 percent of our statewide supply comes from the Colorado River. Utah's agricultural production depends on reliable deliveries. Uncertainty threatens rural economies, property values, and the Wasatch Front's long-term growth. Utah has every incentive to meet its obligations, and we intend to do so through cooperation rather than compulsion.

It is equally important that Lower Basin states recognize that their overuse cannot be resolved by shifting burdens upstream or by relying on federal intervention. Long-term sustainability requires real reductions and durable conservation within the Lower Basin.

Secretary Burgum, consistent federal leadership is essential. We believe you and your team can play a critical role in breaking the current logjam by taking the following actions:

1. Affirm that a seven-state negotiated agreement is Interior's primary objective.
2. State clearly that litigation or federal intervention is not a substitute for meaningful compromise.
3. Hold every state accountable for participating in good-faith negotiations to reach agreement by February 14.
4. Direct the Bureau of Reclamation to immediately share with all seven states as much detail as possible on Colorado River operations in the absence of a deal, so that all parties understand the consequences of failing to reach agreement.

The window for success is closing. We need a clear signal from you that without a negotiated settlement, the basin will enter a period of uncertainty that harms every state. Utah is committed to avoiding that outcome. We request the opportunity to brief your office further on Utah's commitments and concerns and stand ready to engage immediately.

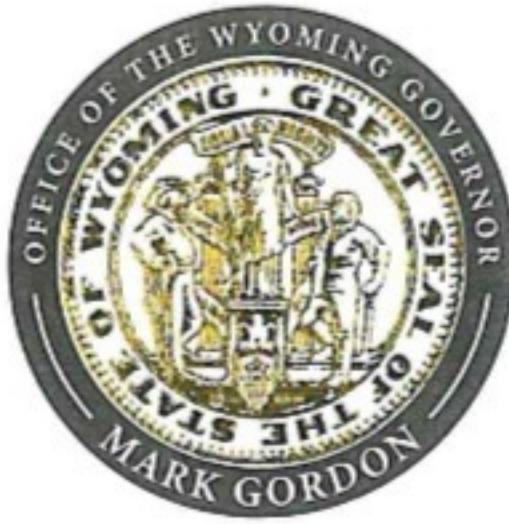
The Colorado River has long tested whether Western states and the federal government can solve complex problems through partnership. Utah remains committed to that tradition. We believe litigation and unilateral federal action are unnecessary, destabilizing, and contrary to state sovereignty. Utah is prepared to negotiate fully and in good faith.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to working with you in the critical weeks ahead.

Respectfully,



Spencer J. Cox  
Governor  
State of Utah



December 17, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

Thank you for your leadership and willingness to facilitate productive dialogue between the seven Basin States of the Colorado River. It remains my top priority to reach a seven-state agreement on future river operations, and I remain willing and available to meet with you and my fellow Governors to work towards a solution.

It is not lost on anyone in the Basin that time, whether through procedural or hydrological constraints, is running out. In order to reach an agreement, an honest and concerted effort is necessary from both the Upper and Lower Basins, and our individual states, to achieve the best possible outcome for Colorado River Basin water users. Governors rightfully have their constituents' best interests at heart when approaching this complex situation. However, a failure to compromise will lead to inflexible unilateral federal actions and costly, unpredictable litigation with serious negative impacts for all of our people.

We do not have the time to play politics, rehash past disagreements, or curry favor with potential decision makers through the national spotlight on this River. Through myself and my Colorado River Commissioner, Wyoming continues to stand ready to work with your Department and the other states in a meaningful, collaborative, and good faith manner. I look forward to our continued dialogue.

Sincerely,

Mark Gordon  
Governor of Wyoming

MG:nr:kh