

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statement from JB Hamby on the
Post-2026 Final Environmental Impact Statement**
Chairman of the Colorado River Board of California and
Colorado River Commissioner for California

Today, the U.S. Department of the Interior released the Final Environmental Impact Statement establishing a federal framework for Colorado River operations after 2026.

This is an important milestone, but it is not the finish line. The framework establishes sideboards on operations for the next ten years. It does not conclude the Basin States' negotiations, predetermine specific operating decisions, including Lake Powell releases or shortages, or serve as the operating plan itself.

Operating plans with specific parameters will be developed in two-year increments, allowing decisions to respond to changing hydrology within the sideboards of the framework released today. The immediate next step is the federal release of the operating plan for 2027 and 2028. On May 1, the Lower Basin states proposed a specific path forward, and California, Arizona, and Nevada remain actively engaged in carrying that work into this next phase.

The Lower Basin's proposal included 3.2 million acre-feet of conservation through 2028, including 1.25 million acre-feet of binding reductions in both 2027 and 2028 and at least 700,000 acre-feet of additional conservation.

The proposal responds to a fundamental reality: the Colorado River no longer reliably produces enough water to support all the uses and expectations built around it. That challenge is shared across the Basin, and addressing it requires specific, measurable reductions in water use by every state.

The experience of California, Arizona, and Nevada shows that communities and economies can grow while using less Colorado River water. California's use has fallen to its lowest level since 1949, even as the state and the communities served by the river have grown to 19 million people and a \$1.6 trillion Southern California economy.

This did not happen by accident. It took investment, conservation, and hard decisions.

We all know what the river needs, and we are proud that our Lower Basin proposal shows that when we work together, we can do what is necessary, even when it is difficult.

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For nearly 90 years, the Colorado River Board of California's mission has been to protect the interests and rights of the State of California, its agencies and citizens, in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. The Colorado River Board represents the State of California and its members in discussions and negotiations with the Colorado River Basin States, federal, state, local governmental agencies, and Mexico regarding the management of the Colorado River.