

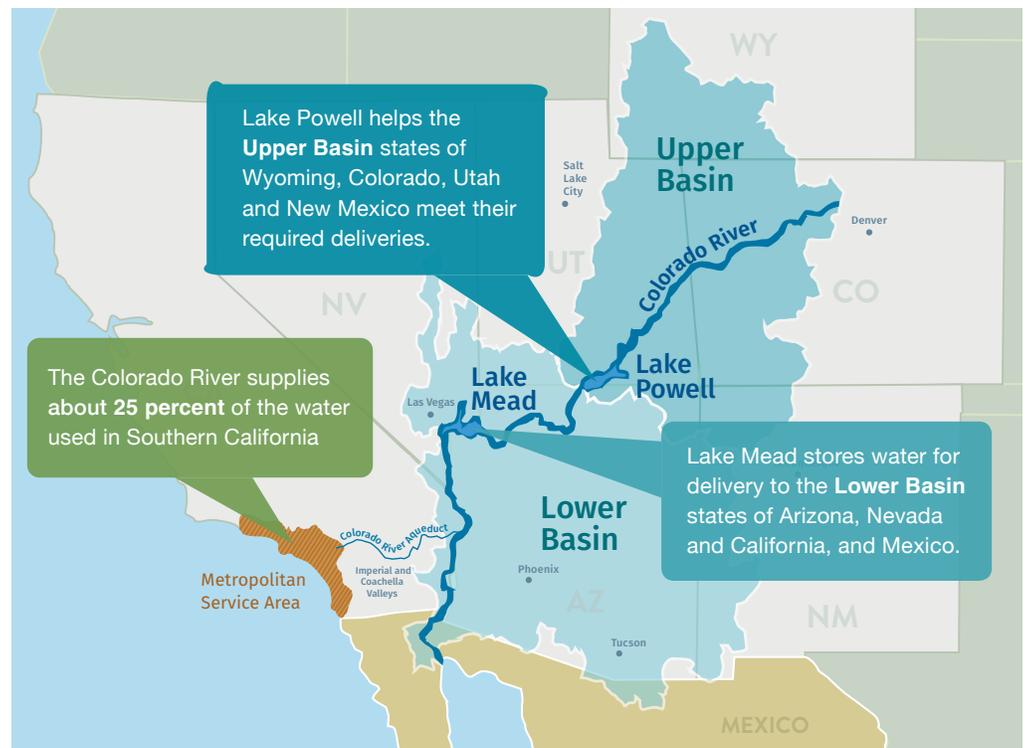
# COLLABORATION ON THE COLORADO RIVER: WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP A MORE SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY



The Southwest's reliance on the Colorado River is hard to overstate – 40 million people, 5 million acres of farmland, the economies of seven states and diverse ecosystems and wildlife depend on its water. But that reliance is being challenged as climate change, unprecedented drought and growing demands have caused flows on the Colorado River to drop dramatically and storage levels in the system's two largest reservoirs – Lake Mead and Lake Powell – to do the same. In response, the federal government, states and urban and agricultural water districts that depend on the Colorado River worked together to produce a solution – the Drought Contingency Plan. The plan, signed in May 2019, is a collection of agreements within and among the seven western states in the Colorado River Basin to boost storage levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell and prevent the reservoirs from reaching critically low levels. The Metropolitan Water District has been a leader in this ongoing collaboration and is committed to working cooperatively within California and beyond to ensure the plan's success.

## Supporting the Southwest

Seven states and part of the country of Mexico are dependent on the well-being of the Colorado River. Under the DCP, the Lower Basin states agreed to contribute water to keep water levels higher in Lake Mead. The Upper Basin states gained tools, including coordinated reservoir management and water banking, to maintain higher levels in Lake Powell.



## Benefits of Working Collaboratively

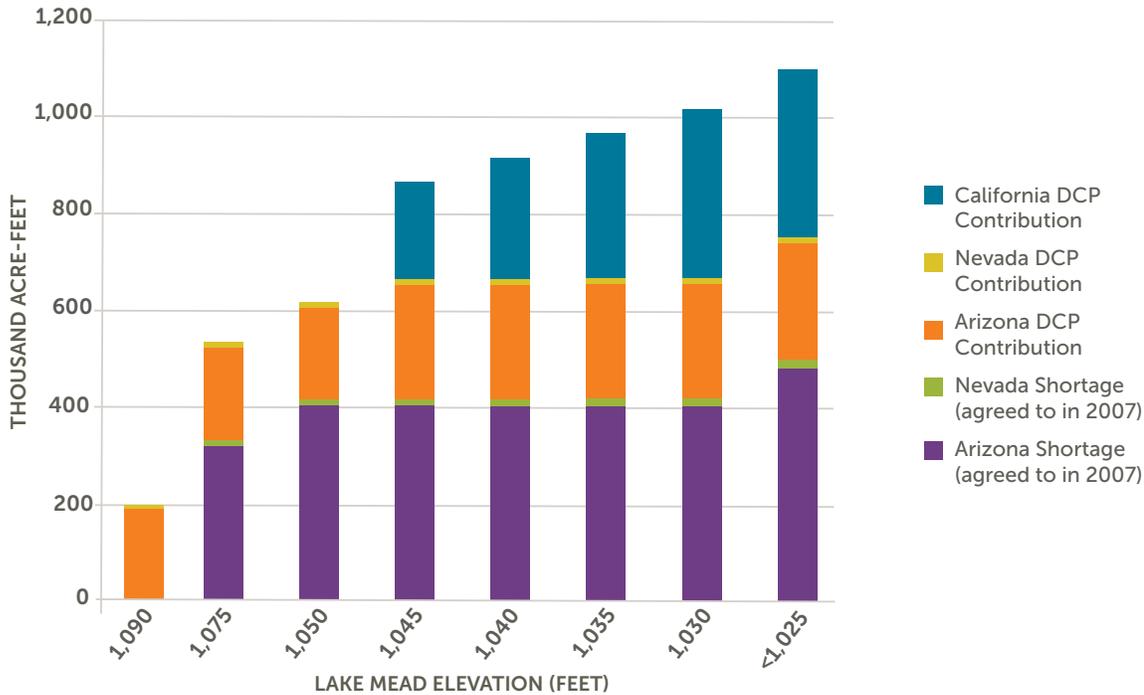
- » Reduces risk of Lake Mead reaching critically low levels that would trigger severe mandatory cuts in the Lower Basin
- » Protects power generation at Hoover Dam
- » Secures stability in deliveries, allowing states to develop long-term solutions to structural imbalance on Colorado River
- » Allows Metropolitan access at lower elevations to its conserved water stored in Lake Mead
- » Avoids protracted litigation and political, legislative mandates
- » Supports flexibility built into Metropolitan's system reliability, including diverse storage, water transfer and land fallowing programs

# Contributing to the Solution

Due to long-term drought conditions, Lake Mead’s water level has dropped 130 feet since the year 2000. Under a 2007 agreement between the seven Colorado River Basin states, if Lake Mead’s level drops to 1,075 feet above sea level, an official shortage would be declared, triggering cuts in water deliveries

to Arizona and Nevada. Further decline in lake levels would have additional, increasingly severe consequences. Under the Drought Contingency Plan, the Lower Basin States have agreed to help avoid these larger declines and the significant challenges they would bring by leaving additional water in Lake Mead.

**TOTAL LOWER BASIN CONTRIBUTIONS WITH DCP BY LAKE MEAD ELEVATION**



**CALIFORNIA CONTRIBUTION**  
Under the DCP:

Lake Mead Level Below 1,045 feet = California contribution 200,000-350,000 acre feet/year

Shared by:

- Metropolitan Water District
- Palo Verde Irrigation District
- Coachella Valley Water District

# More Collaboration on the Horizon

With Colorado River supplies already over-allocated, climate change is expected to exacerbate the imbalance by further decreasing flows on the Colorado River as temperatures warm.

Effective through 2026, the DCP provides stability while states and water agencies develop longer-term solutions to the existing Colorado River imbalance.

## ABOUT METROPOLITAN

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative of 26 member agencies – cities and public water agencies – that serve nearly 19 million people in six counties. Metropolitan imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies and helps its members develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource management programs.

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.