

# **\$700 million to go to Colorado River water conservation, federal officials say**

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The U.S. Department of the Interior has announced it will invest \$700 million in federal funding for long-term water conservation projects across the Lower Colorado River Basin, including Lake Mead.

The funding will be devoted to projects including water distribution structures, desalination, [water recycling](#) and purification and farm efficiency improvements that can potentially save more than 700,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead, department officials stated in a news release.

The projects are critical for enhancing the long-term drought and climate resilience of the Colorado River's Lower Basin, Interior officials stated.

Through legislation passed by Congress in 2022 that created the Lower Colorado Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program, the Bureau of Reclamation is investing a total of \$8.3 billion over five years for water infrastructure projects, including rural water, water storage, conservation and conveyance, according to officials.

"The Colorado River Basin provides water for more than 40 million people, fuels hydropower resources in seven U.S. states, is a crucial resource for 30 Tribal Nations and two states in Mexico, and supports 5.5 million acres of agriculture and agricultural communities across the West," Interior officials stated.

With a 23-year drought that led to record low water levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, the U.S. government is leading an effort to prevent the Colorado River system's reservoirs from falling to critically low elevations threatening water deliveries and power production in the region, according to the release.

Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton stated that the agency is committed to saving more than 1.7 million acre-feet of water in the basin through 2026.

The bureau is working with Native American, state and individual water entitlement holders on proposals for projects located in Arizona, Nevada

and Southern California and selected projects will be announced in the future, officials stated.

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