

CALIFORNIA AND THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN

Background and Current Status

March 27, 2023



Colorado River Board
of California

The Colorado River Basin

- “Law of the River” guides management
- Apportionments to Upper Basin (CO, NM, UT, WY), Lower Basin (AZ, CA, NV), and Mexico
- The River supports:
 - 40 million people (50% in California)
 - 30 federally recognized Native American tribes
 - 5.5 million acres of irrigated agriculture
 - 4,200 megawatts of hydropower
 - 11 national parks & 4 national recreation areas



California's Management of its Colorado River Supplies

- Basic Apportionment of 4.4 MAF annually, including some of most senior water rights in the Basin
- 2003 Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA)
 - Nation's largest ag-urban conservation and transfer program
 - Allowed California to permanently reduce water use by about 0.800 MAFY
- In 2019, CA voluntarily agreed to participate in Drought Contingency Plan to bolster storage in Lake Mead



California Colorado River Agriculture

Senior priority agricultural water rights collectively total up to 3,850,000 acre-feet



Palo Verde Irrigation District – Unquantified water rights serving approximately 105,000 acres of forage, vegetable and fruit crops.

- Implements a large-scale MWD following program.



Bard Water District – Unquantified water rights serving about 7,100 acres of forage and vegetable crops.

- Implements a MWD seasonal following program.



Coachella Valley Water District – 330,000 AF of priority 3b water rights (plus 123,000 of transfer water) serving about 63,000 acres of dates, vegetables, fruits and grass crops.

- Implemented a Coachella Canal concrete lining project for SDCWA.



Imperial Irrigation District – 3,100,000 AF of priority 3a water rights serving about 472,000 acres of forage, vegetable and fruit crops.

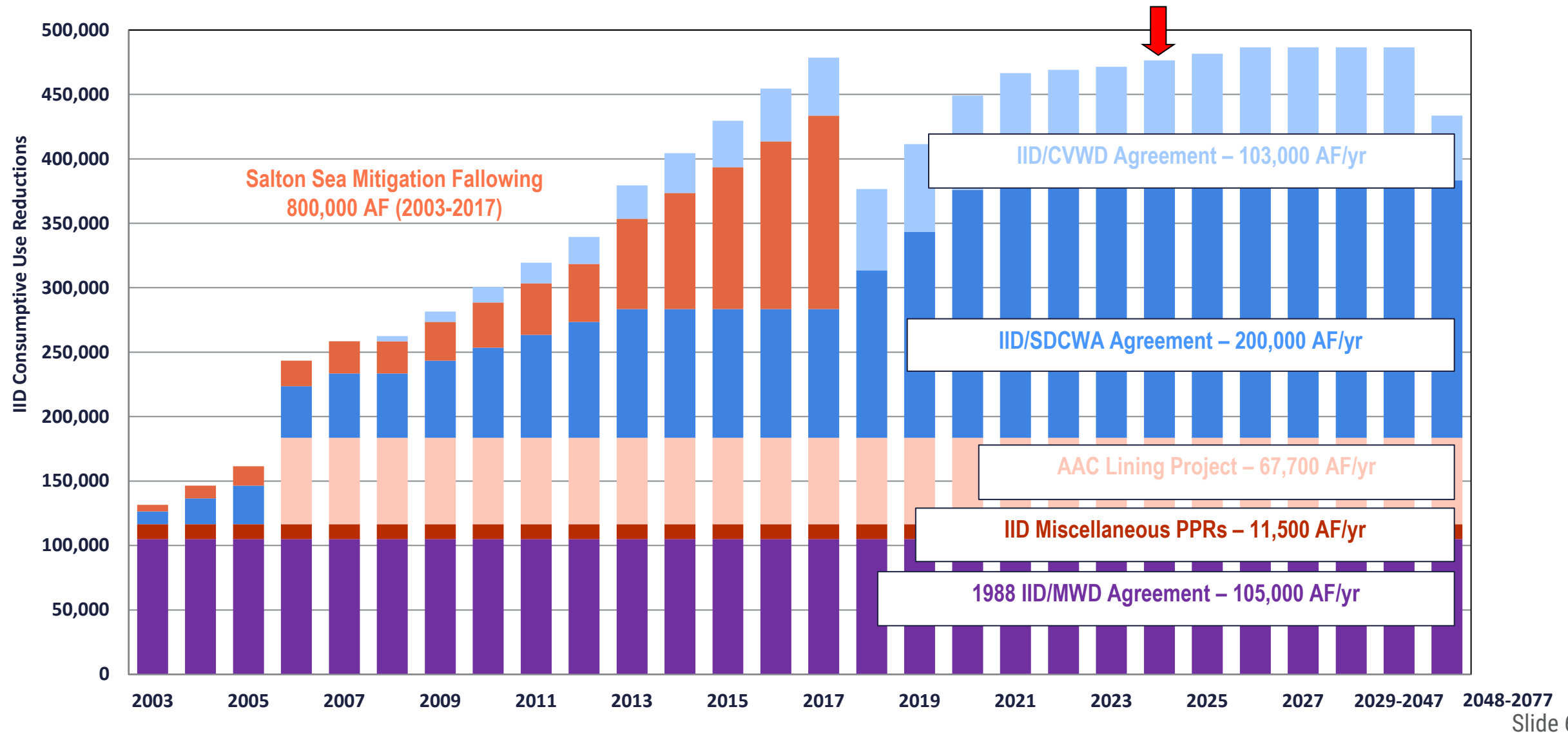
- Implements the nation's largest ag-to-urban conservation program for MWD/SDCWA/CVWD.

IID's Water Supply & Conservation In Context



- The Colorado River is the region's **only water supply**, with water delivered to rural farms, communities, homes and businesses.
- IID has a **year-round growing season** with robust cropping yields that provide the nation a **safe and reliable food supply**. **One in every six** jobs in Imperial Valley is directly related to agriculture.
- The communities that rely on IID for water are largely **disadvantaged, underserved minority populations**.
- IID **conserves and transfers 16 percent** of its water supply, more than 485,000 AFY, to other Southern California water districts to support regional water supply reliability.
- The California Plan proposes for IID's conservation to increase to about 750,000 AFY, or **more than 24 percent** of IID's entitlement.
- Any IID conservation reduces Salton Sea inflows, contributing to **ecosystem and public health (air quality) impacts**.

The California Solution: QSA/Water Conservation & Transfer Programs



1988 IID/MWD Conservation Program

MWD funded capital improvements to IID's conveyance system (completed in 1997) and related annual O&M expenses in exchange for the 105,000 acre-feet per year of conservation those projects generate.



2003 QSA Conservation Programs

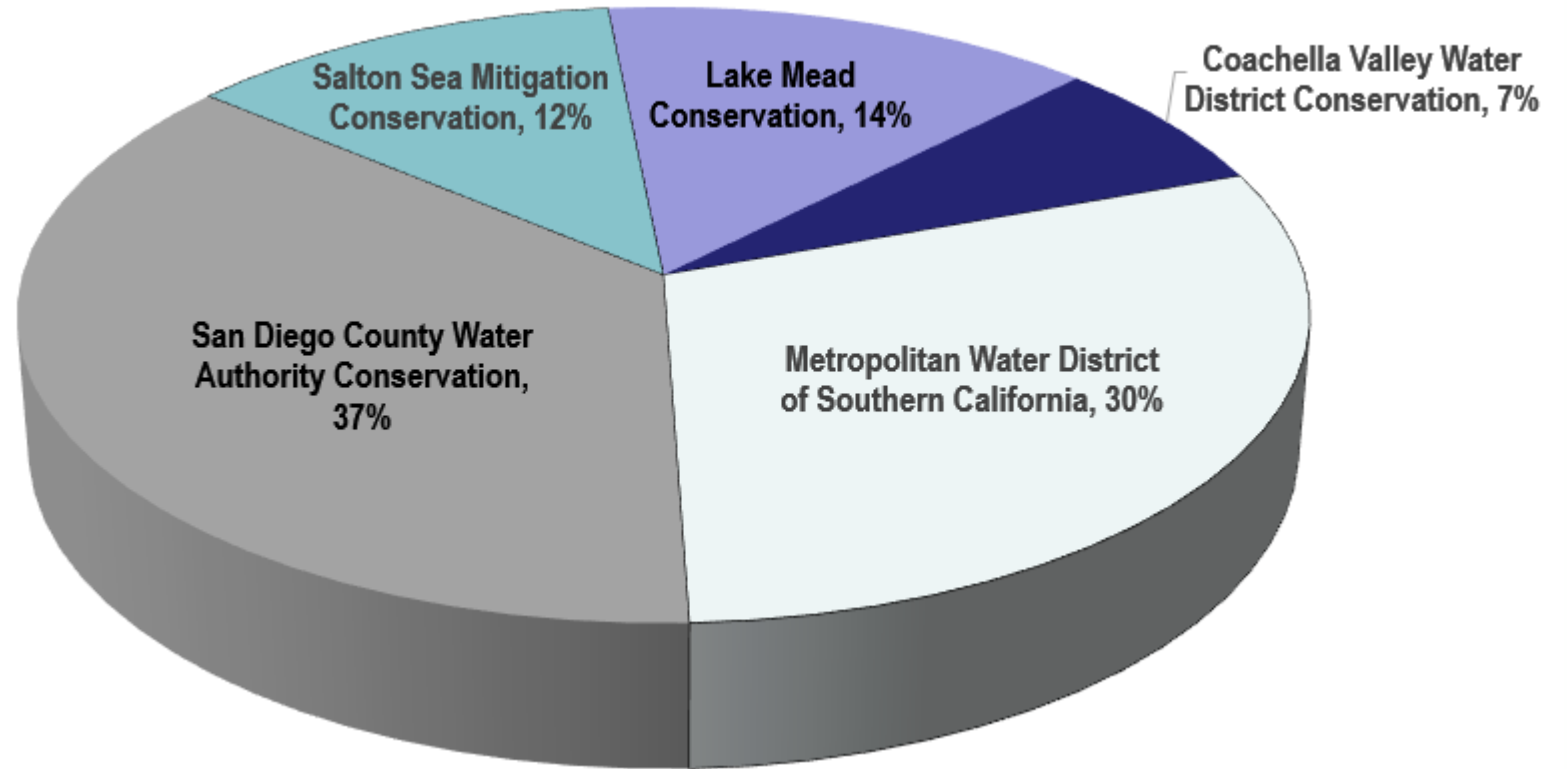
Construction of capital improvement infrastructure projects that conserve water and increase operational flexibility and implementation of on-farm efficiency conservation programs that provide funding for verified conservation measures.

- Seepage recovery systems, lateral interties, operational reservoirs, canal concrete lining, automation, and technology improvements.
- \$500+ million in direct payments to growers/landowners to implement field-level irrigation improvements (tailwater return systems, drip irrigation, sprinklers, precision land-leveling, etc.)



IID's QSA Water Conservation & Transfer Summary

Conserved Volume
from 2003-2022
Greater than 7.2
million acre-feet



* 2022 conservation yield estimated

System Storage as of 2/13/23

Lake Powell
23% of capacity
5.4 MAF
3,522'

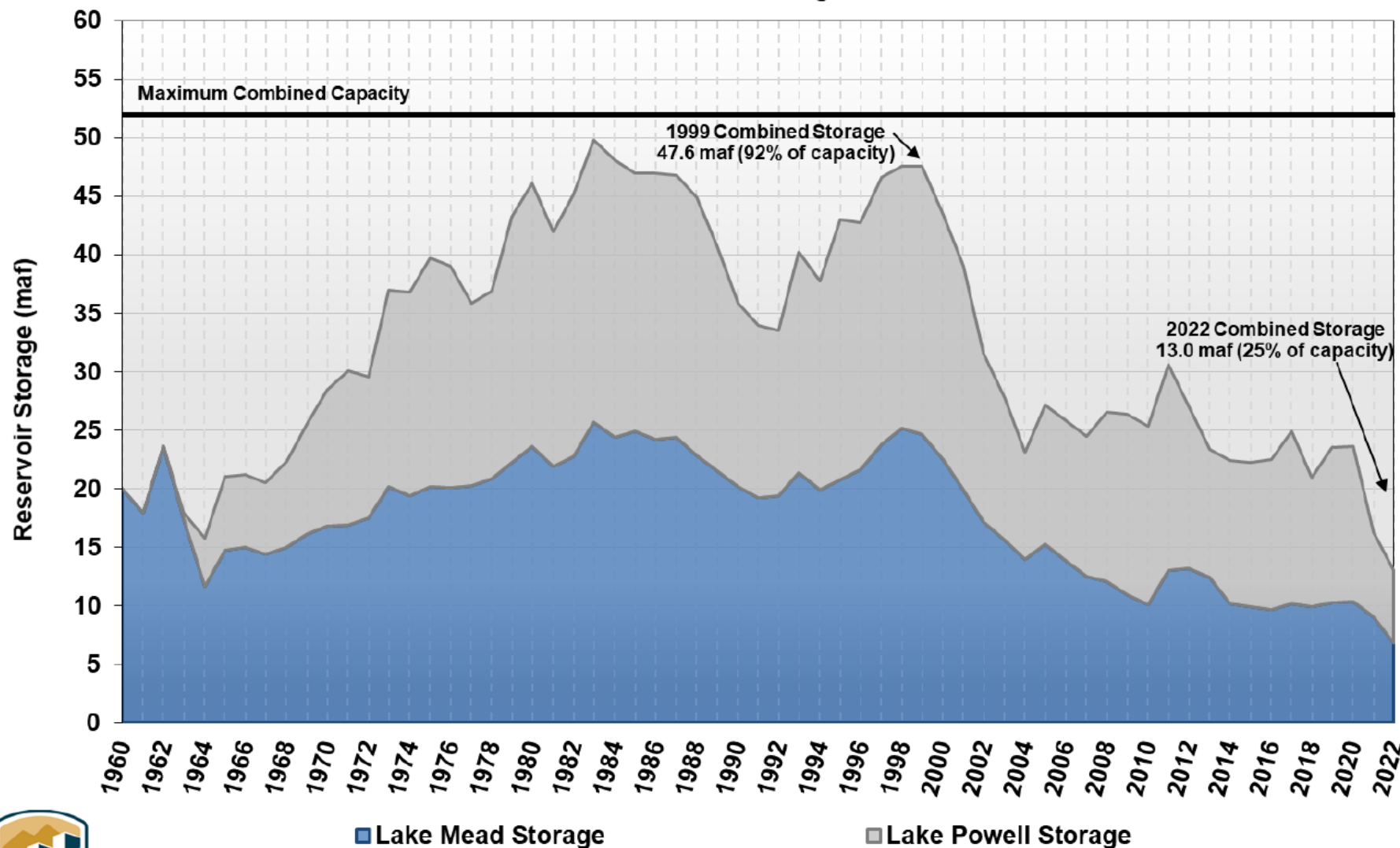
Lake Mead
29% of capacity
7.5 MAF
1,048'

Total System Storage
32% of capacity
19.0 MAF



Lake Powell and Lake Mead End of Water Year Storage

Water Years 1960 through 2022



* Projected end of water year 2022 storage based on the May 2022 24-Month Study



Addressing Declining Storage

- Demands outstrip Supply
- Commissioner Touton called for 2-4 MAFY of reductions in June 2022
- CA agreed to conserve an additional 0.400 MAFY
- DOI is preparing an SEIS modifying the 2007 Shortage Guidelines to protect infrastructure at Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams
- Changes to be implemented in 2023-2026
- Six States (AZ, CO, NV, NM, UT, and WY) submitted proposal for the SEIS process
- CA submitted separate proposal for the SEIS

How Do the Proposals Compare?

Six State Proposal

Lower, fixed releases from Glen Canyon Dam

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No targets for Upper Basin conservation

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Implements mandatory, uncompensated reductions of ~2 MAF pro rata among all users in the Lower Basin and Mexico, regardless of priority

California Proposal

Allows for slightly higher releases from Glen Canyon Dam if Lake Mead is low

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Upper Basin conservation at Powell elevations <3,575'

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Implements ~ 2 MAF additional reductions, prioritizing transfers, voluntary agreements, and use of priority system, if necessary

Prevents Lake Powell from declining below elevation 3,500'

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Prevents Lake Mead from declining below elevation 1,000'

-

Reductions begin at higher elevations than under previous plans

-

Creates rules for reductions at critically low Lake Mead levels

-

Total Lower Basin reductions
Of up to ~3.3 MAFY



States and Federal Government **Next Steps**

- Draft SEIS - April 2023
- Final SEIS/ROD – July 2023
- Action can begin – August 2023
- Seven States continue to work to develop consensus-based agreements to inform Final SEIS
- BIL & IRA funding supports voluntary water conservation, water use and system efficiency projects