



Executive Committee

Update on Draft SEIS for Colorado River Interim Guidelines

Item 7a
May 23, 2023

Executive Committee

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) uses the 2007 Interim Guidelines to manage operation of Lake Powell/Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Mead/Hoover Dam

SEIS Background

- Spring 2022: Lake Powell and Lake Mead decline to lowest elevations since initial filling
- June 2022: Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner calls for 2-4 maf in annual reductions
- August 2022: Congress appropriates \$4 billion in Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for drought mitigation
- November 2022: Reclamation initiates process to change 2007 Interim Guidelines through SEIS
- April 2023: Reclamation publishes draft SEIS
- May 2023: 7-States request Reclamation pause comment deadline and analyze Lower Basin Plan and Reclamation agrees to temporarily withdraw SEIS to perform analysis

PIO Meeting

Draft SEIS Alternatives

The Draft SEIS notes the alternatives submitted by the Colorado River Basin States but developed its own alternatives for analysis in this SEIS process

Three Alternatives Analyzed

- **Alternative 1:** reduces deliveries in the Lower Basin according to priority
- **Alternative 2:** reduces deliveries to all Lower Basin water users on a pro-rata basis
- No Action Alternative
- Draft SEIS did not identify a preferred alternative

Next Step in the SEIS Process

Lower Basin Plan Announced

- Reclamation to analyze impacts of Lower Basin Plan
- States and water users to develop implementing agreements

Final SEIS & Record of Decision

- Public Comment
- Revised draft SEIS
- Board authorization of implementing agreements

Lower Basin Plan Terms

Lower Basin Plan does not require the Secretary to unilaterally exercise her authorities to implement reductions or contemplate any waiver of those authorities

New Conservation

- Minimum of 3 million acre-feet (maf) of system conservation in 2023-2026
 - At least 1.5 maf by end of 2024
- New conservation up to 2.3 maf will be federally compensated under IRA
 - Compensated conservation will be mandatory, enforceable, measurable, verifiable, and non-retrievable

Lower Basin Plan Terms

Existing shortage and DCP contribution obligations under the 2007 Interim Guidelines, Lower Basin DCP, and Treaty Minute 323 will remain in place

New Conservation, cont'd

- The remaining new conservation may be compensated or uncompensated
 - All or a portion of this may be offset with ICS created in 2023-2026
 - ICS designated as meeting the new conservation goal cannot be delivered, transferred, or assigned before December 31, 2026
 - Due to the limitation on ICS storage space, some DCP ICS will become system water, which is an uncompensated addition of system water

Lower Basin Plan Terms

Glen Canyon Dam operations will be consistent with the existing 2007 Interim Guidelines and the DCPs

Protection Elevations

- Reclamation may act independently to protect
 - Lake Mead elevation 1,000 feet
 - Lake Powell elevation 3,500 feet
- Annual releases from Glen Canyon Dam may be reduced to protect Lake Powell elevation 3,500 feet to no less than 6.0 maf, under specified conditions

