

STATE OF COLORADO

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

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Bill Owens
Governor

April 21, 2005

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton:

During the recent multiple year drought, water supply conditions in the Colorado River Basin have deteriorated. As a result, water users in the Upper Basin have sustained significant shortages in water supply over the last several years, and Lake Powell has declined below the level at which development in the Upper Basin under the Colorado River Compact is protected.

Our representatives have worked closely with their counterparts in the other Colorado River Basin States and with the Bureau of Reclamation to assess alternatives for management of Lakes Powell and Mead that would entail agreement on the quantity of water you would release from Lake Powell in 2005. Although we remain open to continued discussions, the Basin States have not yet reached agreement on such a plan.

In the meantime, under the 2005 Annual Operating Plan, you will determine in April if the runoff forecast warrants an adjustment in releases from Lake Powell for the remainder of water year 2005. I am writing to express support for the unified Upper Basin position with respect to that determination.

Our representatives have joined with the other Upper Basin States and provided you a joint letter expressing their position relative to your April 2005 determination. I have reviewed that position, and fully concur with it.

I would be pleased to discuss this matter with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Bill Owens