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**COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION
OF NEVADA**

December 11, 2023

Bureau of Reclamation
Attn: Reclamation 2007 Interim Guidelines SEIS Project Manager
Upper Colorado Basin Region, 125 South State Street, Suite 8100
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

Via Email only – CRinterimops@usbr.gov

**RE: Comments on the revised Draft Supplemental Environmental
Impact Statement for Near-term Colorado River Operations**

Dear 2007 Interim Guidelines SEIS Project Manager:

The Colorado River Commission of Nevada (CRCNV) submits the following comments regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) revised Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Near-term Colorado River Operations (SEIS) with Notice of Availability published in the Federal Register on October 27, 2023 by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Colorado River is Southern Nevada's primary water resource supporting over 2.4 million residents and roughly 38 million tourists annually. The CRCNV is the state agency responsible for protecting the rights and interests of Nevada's allocation of Colorado River water and hydropower resources. The CRCNV has a significant interest in water matters that could impact water agencies, cities, and industries located within Southern Nevada. The CRCNV delivers hydropower to 23 contractors which is used for electric utilities, municipalities, educational institutions, Nevada state agencies, and companies that produce goods and services.

The CRCNV supports Reclamation's efforts to modify near-term operations in preparation of potential continued low-runoff conditions due to climate change and drought until the post-2026 operational guidelines are implemented. The CRCNV appreciates Reclamation's decision to include the Lower Basin Proposal as the proposed alternative and eliminating Alternatives 1 and 2 from further analysis.

The CRCNV supports the comment letter provided to Reclamation by the Lower Basins' Governor representatives and provides the following additional comments that pertain to water and hydropower customers in Southern Nevada:

Protection of Critical Elevations. Establishing protection elevations in Lake Mead and Lake Powell should continue to be a critical component of reservoir operations or emergency actions to protect infrastructure, water deliveries, and hydropower generation. Protecting Lake Mead at 1,000' and Lake Powell at 3,500,' as described in the Lower Basin Proposal and included in the SEIS proposed alternative, will reduce risks to water and hydropower customers over the long term.

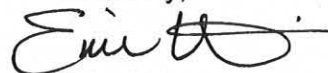
Alternatives 1 and 2. Alternatives 1 and 2 were considered but eliminated from a detailed analysis in the SEIS, but section 2.4 states that "different parts of any of the alternatives" may be selected to meet the purpose and need. Since there was not a detailed analysis of the eliminated alternatives, there is inadequate information to incorporate parts from Alternative 1 and 2 into the preferred alternative of the final SEIS.

Nevada's Entitlement Dates. Although the proposed alternative in the SEIS does not rely on the Shortage Allocation Model to distribute shortages among water users in Nevada, the CRCNV does not agree with some of the models' assumptions or the interpretation of Nevada's entitlement dates in allocating shortages. The CRCNV appreciates Reclamations commitment to resolve these issues.

By providing comments, the CRCNV does not waive any rights, including any claims or defenses that may arise during the completion of the SEIS. Aspects of the SEIS where comments were not provided should not be construed as an endorsement, including, without limitation, the alternatives eliminated from full analysis and their underlying shortage allocation assumptions. The CRCNV reserves the right to provide additional comments and/or engage with Reclamation throughout the NEPA process.

The CRCNV appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this SEIS and supports the proposed alternative's near-term actions that will reduce the risks to the Colorado River Basin.

Sincerely,



Eric Witkoski
Executive Director

Cc:
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