

Letter #: 1344
Date Received: 12/15/2022
Sender Names: 737: Thomas Welch
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Organizations:
Subject: Proposed SEIS Guidelines

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Dear Project Manager:

I was raised in Las Vegas, and Lake Mead hasn't been an important park of my youth, and now I pass that along to my children. We currently have a houseboat and a wakeboard/surf boat. Both are stored at Hemenway Harbor. We spend some of our best and most precious quality family time together at Lake Mead. It is a place for us to get away. Enjoy nature, the water, fishing, boating, wakesurfing, wakeboarding, paddle boarding, jetskiing, camping, swimming, kayaking. There is no other place like it, other than Lake Powell. Both these lakes will be affected by the future decisions that you made. I can't imagine not being able to have access to these two fabulous lakes. Also, growing up in Las Vegas Boulder city has become a hub with many businesses that rely on Lake Mead goes. I also recognize the importance of the reservoirs and dams in the Colorado River Basin for providing a reliable source of water and energy. But one must take into account the effects that changes make to the communities and families that enjoy Lake Mead & Lake Powell!!!!

I am writing to provide feedback for the Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to the Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead as well as the National Park Service's proposed concepts for addressing low water levels on Lake Mead. I recognize that this message is being sent to both agencies, because even though each agency is conducting a separate planning process, the two plans are interrelated.

I believe the Bureau of Reclamation needs to take action due to declining water levels in reservoirs. I encourage the Bureau of Reclamation and National Park Service to consider the recreation interests of Lake Mead and Lake Powell. I believe BOR and NPS need to protect the future of recreation and motorized access on the reservoirs. If NPS chooses to not build new infrastructure or maintain current resources based on low water levels it could jeopardize or completely eliminate the recreational experience of over 7 million visitors to Lake Mead and 4 million visitors to Lake Powell.

BOR may need to take unprecedented actions in order to preserve water levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead. I support the BlueRibbon Coalition's Path to 3588' Plan as it will address low water levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead. This plan is a common sense path that balances the needs of all the water users in the basin. By adjusting outflows against actual inflows and current lake levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell, this plan creates a sustainable path forward for adaptively managing these reservoirs instead of managing them headlong into a crisis. I oppose BOR's current path of liquidating these reservoirs to the point of crisis. The substantial pain at the end of the path BOR is currently on will be far worse than the minor temporary pain required now to correct course.

As the Bureau of Reclamation creates alternatives, BOR needs to strongly consider the needs of recreational users and balance these needs along with the interests of other water users. Outdoor recreation generates billions of dollars each year, sustaining many local economies. These communities rely on continued recreation access to Lake Powell and Lake Mead for continued economic growth. These communities, which include neighboring Tribal Nations, would suffer significant losses if recreation is lost or decreased due to

water elevation levels. As launch ramps and marinas close due to water levels, businesses are hurt and economic losses impact the entire region surrounding the Lake. NPS estimates that both Lake Mead and Lake Powell produce almost \$500 million in direct economic impact to gateway communities, and we estimate that the broader impact is measured in billions. This economic impact dwarfs the economic impact created by power. By developing a "recreation alternative" BOR will also have a plan that allows for better water level buffers that are needed to prevent reaching the points of lost power generation capacity and/or dead pool.

We are already starting to see unthinkable impacts to recreation because of the lack of viable guidelines for addressing shortages in Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Regarding Lake Mead the National Park Service is considering the closure of each major marina on Lake Mead, I do not support any of the proposals identified in Concept 3 of the NPS plan that would remove all infrastructure and facilities. Concept 3 completely ignores the current and future needs of the public and should not be considered. However, NPS says this alternative in the planning process is necessary in the case that BOR adopts a plan for managing lake levels that doesn't do what is necessary to keep both lakes at higher levels. I strongly support any concept proposed by NPS that makes the necessary adaptations to keep as many facilities open to serve as many members of the public as possible.

Thanks

Sincerely,

Thomas Welch

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