

Letter #: 366
Date Received: 12/22/2022
Sender Names: 743: Daniel Child
Emails: 743: [REDACTED]
Organizations:
Subject: Proposed SEIS Guidelines

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Dear Project Manager:

I enjoy recreating on public lands and waters. I also recognize the importance of the reservoirs and dams in the Colorado River Basin for providing a reliable source of water and energy. 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, which include Tribal Nations, rely on recreational access and would suffer significant losses if recreation is lost or decreased due to water elevation levels. As launch ramps and marinas close, businesses are hurt and economic losses impact the entire region surrounding the lakes. 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 needed to prevent reaching the points of lost power generation capacity and/or dead pool.

We are already seeing 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 all major marinas on the lake. 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 must not be considered. However, NPS says this a necessary alternative in case BOR adopts a plan for managing lake levels that doesn't work to keep both lakes at higher levels. I strongly support all concepts that make necessary adaptations to keep facilities open to serve as many members of the public as possible.

I expect BOR and NPS to include analysis of the economic importance of recreation in addition to feedback on power generation and water deliveries. There are so many variables affecting both lake's elevations, i.e. precipitation, snowpack, runoff, release volumes, and upstream reservoirs' levels, the Bureau needs to consider changing the "target" elevation. In the long run, I think 3588 feet is a better target elevation for Lake Powell and an elevation between 1050 and 1075 is better for Lake Mead. This allows them to meet the demand for recreation on the lakes in a way that also protects the power generation and water rights interests.

Remember as well, these reservoirs have performed exactly as intended over the past decade by keeping water available for the downstream users. They are getting low now, but without them, we would have been out of water for both agriculture and domestic water users in the southwestern United States many years ago. We have to maintain these reservoirs for current and future droughts!

Sincerely,

Daniel Child

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]