



December 20, 2022

Project Manager  
2007 Interim Guidelines SEIS  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Upper Colorado Basin Region  
125 South State Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

Re: Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the December 2007 Record of Decision (ROD) Entitled Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Dear Project Manager,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments in response to the above-referenced NOI.

The Washington County Water Conservancy District (District) is a political subdivision of the State of Utah. The District is charged with conserving, developing, managing, and stabilizing water supplies for the citizens of Washington County.

The U.S. Census has identified Washington County as the fastest-growing metro area in America.<sup>1</sup> The county's population is projected to more than double by 2050.<sup>2</sup> Washington County is Utah's hottest, driest region. All major population centers are currently dependent on a single water source, the Virgin River Basin, which is reaching its full development capacity. The basin has been in drought conditions 16 of the last 20 years and water supply levels at local reservoirs are decreasing.

The county's long-term water supply plan includes additional water conservation and reuse, local source optimization, desalinization, and agricultural optimization. Washington County has already reduced its per capita water use more than 30%

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<sup>1</sup> Hemmersmeier, S. (2022, April 2). *Census: St. George is Fastest-Growing in U.S. Again*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/utah-st-george-census-2020-19c02de8f8a6d0de0528c422eb84f15a>

<sup>2</sup> *Utah Long-Term Planning Projection Summary*, (2022, January 31). Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. <https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/LongTermProj-Jan2022.pdf?x71849&x71849>

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since 2000—the greatest reduction in water use in Utah—and is planning for an additional 14% reduction by 2030, using 2015 as the baseline year.

The District has a strong interest in Colorado River operations in both the near and long-term. The District supports the Colorado River Authority of Utah's (Authority) efforts in developing a basin wide consensus alternative and is coordinating with the Authority on this and other Colorado River matters. The District hereby incorporates the Authority's comments on the NOI.

Respectfully,



Zachary Renstrom  
General Manager  
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cc: Wayne Pullan, Upper Colorado Basin Regional Director