

Letter #: 655
Date Received: 12/19/2022
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Organizations:
Subject: Proposed SEIS Guidelines

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Dear Project Manager:

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. This message is being sent to both agencies, because even though each agency is conducting a separate planning process, the two plans are interrelated.

As water levels decline in reservoirs, I encourage the Bureau of Reclamation and National Park Service to consider the recreation interests of Lake Mead and Lake Powell. The BOR and NPS should 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. 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. 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. As launch ramps and marinas close due to water levels, businesses are hurt and economic losses impact the entire region surrounding the Lake. 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 Lake Mead 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.

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.

BOR and NPS should include analysis of the economic importance of recreation in addition to feedback on power generation and water deliveries. I think 3588 feet is a better target elevation for Lake Powell and an elevation between 1050 and 1075 is a better elevation for Lake Mead to meet the demand for recreation on the lake in a way that also protects the power generation and water right interests.

Though I am not a boater, I support all sustainable recreational uses of all public lands, whether I personally benefit from any particular one or not. Neither do I begrudge tax dollars, reasonably spent, to support such recreational use, particularly to develop infrastructure and amenities, as may be needed to address Lake and Reservoir water level changes.

Keep the Lake Mead National Recreation Area actually recreational, specifically including for the large number of power boating enthusiasts.

Sincerely,

John Bronstein

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[REDACTED]