

**Letter #:** 65  
**Date Received:** 12/14/2022  
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**Subject:** Colorado River SEIS comment

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Withdrawals for irrigation of farm fields and landscapes are the major uses of river water and must be the major targets for consequential savings. The greatest incentive in our market-based economy for savings is price of water clearly intended for these uses. For irrigated farm fields, the true market price of such water must be charged, replacing all subsidies and discounts and other contractual disincentives to use less water, with fallowing being the ultimate saving practice. For all non-xeriscape landscapes, the price to irrigate them with river water must be set at rate that effectively bans green lawns and gardens, especially on golf courses. Golfers should face sticker shock membership and green fees that severely discourage them from that activity. Home buyers should face sticker shock cap fees that discourage expanded development of single-family homes in arid and semi-arid lands reliant on Colorado River water, and there should be a retroactive water use surcharge on all single-family developments in the basin since the CAP was built, a great metric for the beginning of the significant population boom in the basin. The Colorado River basin is a natural and national treasure that has been mismanaged in the face of unending population growth in a water basin that simply cannot meet the demand.

Alternatively, the federal government can better direct its regulatory and budget powers to impose mandatory water and hydropower use restrictions on all users reliant on the river, from paying to remove turf grass to imposing sticker shock surcharges on all air conditioners that allow far too many people to live in the basin hot climate!

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