

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 1

Form Letter 1 was submitted by the Blue Ribbon Coalition. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 379 submittals of Form Letter 1. Of these, 250 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 129 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 1.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 379          |
| Form copy                   | 250          |
| Form plus                   | 129          |

Form #: 1

Date Received: 01/19/2026

Organizations:

Message from DOI - . Bureau of Reclamation, I am writing to encourage you to support the Colorado River Abundance Act. This is crucial legislation is the only serious, long term solution to water issues in the west. Water is becoming more scarce and continuing to reduce water consumption and uses will only last so long. I am worried about critical infrastructure such as Lake Powell and Lake Mead that not only are economic drivers for local economies but provide power and recreation to millions of people. The Colorado River Abundance Act would prioritize desalination and other infrastructure solutions capable of generating millions of acre-feet of water. This legislation would strengthen America's leadership in water innovation, support agriculture, and provide viable solutions to declining water levels in our reservoirs and rivers while continuing to meet water delivery requirements for Colorado River Basin states and Mexico. I believe you should support the Colorado River Abundance Act and help advance durable, forward-looking water solutions that benefit both current and future generations before it is too late.

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## Form Letter 2

Form Letter 2 was submitted by the Outdoor Alliance and the American Whitewater Association. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 657 submittals of Form Letter 2. Of these, 498 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 159 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 2.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 657          |
| Form copy                   | 498          |
| Form plus                   | 159          |

Form #: 2

Date Received: 02/11/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Dear Carly Jerla Bureau of Reclamation, Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Post-2026 Operations). I urge you to take immediate action to protect the future of the Colorado River Basin and to recognize the many ecosystem services that the river and its tributaries provide. When determining the preferred Alternative for Post-2026 Operations, I request that the Bureau of Reclamation prioritize the below elements and work directly with the seven basin states and Tribes to ensure that water conservation measures are effective and capable of supporting a living river for generations to come. - Storage in Lake Powell and management and infrastructure of Glen Canyon Dam must support opportunities for High Flow Experiments in the Grand Canyon for the purposes of sediment and nutrient transport. - Infrastructure updates at Glen Canyon Dam must be prioritized in the short-term to ensure that the dam is capable of passing variable flows downstream as reservoir levels become lower and less predictable. - Conservation measures and delivery of water between the Upper and Lower Basins must balance maintaining minimum flows at all times in the Grand Canyon with allowing for flow variability across the annual hydrograph to support both the river ecosystem and river recreation opportunities. - Water delivery measures that implicate Blue Mesa and Flaming Gorge Reservoirs must consider immediate and downstream impacts to river ecosystems and recreation opportunities, and seek to provide multiple benefits whenever possible. - Impacts to river recreation opportunities on the Colorado River and the San Juan River due to changing reservoir levels must be analyzed and mitigated. - Post-2026 Operations must analyze and consider how operations will affect daily flows in the Grand Canyon and upstream river segments before a final decision is determined, not after. - Operations and agreements must provide for Tribal water rights and respect Tribal sovereignty throughout the Colorado River Basin. A trip through the canyons of the Colorado River leaves a lasting impression on all who make the journey. The river that carved these canyons is the hardest working in the country. Keeping the river flowing and healthy is integral to protecting the safety and welfare of the people who rely on it. We must work with what nature provides and do so together. All of the Colorado River's water users are going to feel a strain, but we cannot sacrifice these special river canyons and the ecosystem services that they provide.

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## Form Letter 3

Form Letter 3 was submitted by the Glen Canyon Institute. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 58 submittals of Form Letter 3. Of these, 42 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 16 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 3.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 58           |
| Form copy                   | 42           |
| Form plus                   | 16           |

Form #: 3

Date Received: 02/18/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . To whom it may concern, I'm writing to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. This Draft fails to meet its stated purpose and need, as it ignores options that would provide operational flexibility and environmental benefits. Specifically: 1. The EIS must analyze the full bypass of Glen Canyon Dam. As climate change continues to reduce flows on the river, the dam becomes more of a liability preventing water from flowing downstream. Analyzing the full bypass of the dam would give the river, its users, and its ecosystem the most flexibility and adaptability in a drier future. By not including Reclamation's existing plans to modify the dam in this EIS, it has needlessly limited options for all stakeholders. 2. The EIS must analyze a "Fill Mead First" model, prioritizing water storage in Mead before Powell. For most of the past decade, there hasn't been enough water in the Colorado's mainstem reservoirs to fill either Lake Powell or Lake Mead. If there isn't enough water to fill either one, it doesn't make sense to needlessly drown the national park-caliber canyons in Glen. Fill Lake Mead first, and give Glen Canyon the opportunity to continue its amazing restoration. By only modelling scenarios with Powell dropping to 3,500 feet above sea level, the EIS ignores important storage paradigms that could benefit the entire basin. 3. The EIS should have acknowledged the extensive emerging resources in Glen Canyon into its models. In the years since Lake Powell reservoir has declined, there has been an amazing reemergence of wonders like Cathedral in the Desert, Gregory Natural Bridge, as well as vital riparian ecosystems, and priceless archeological sites. While the EIS acknowledges some of the values of emerging resources in Glen Canyon, its impact analyses erroneously assume that putting more water in Lake Powell reservoir would somehow benefit these resources. Thank you for your consideration. Olivia Sedgwick Professor, Pima Community College

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## Form Letter 4

Form Letter 4 was submitted by the Coalition for Protecting Arizona’s Lifeline. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 73 submittals of Form Letter 4. Of these, 72 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining submittal was considered a form plus letter, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 4.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 74           |
| Form copy                   | 72           |
| Form plus                   | 2            |

Form #: 4

Date Received: 02/19/2026

Organizations:

Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead DOI - . Bureau of Reclamation Attn: BCOO-1000 P.O. Box 61470 Boulder City, NV 89006 crbpost2026@usbr.gov I am writing to voice my profound concerns regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead and the terrible impacts the DEIS alternatives would have on my community. The Colorado River is critical to supporting my community in Central and Southern Arizona. Colorado River water supplied by the Central Arizona Project flows to our homes, schools, parks, and businesses. As Arizonans, we understand that water is life. Water provides the lifeblood that supports our region's survival. We have carefully used and reused our Colorado River water over the past 40 years, reducing our total uses while more than doubling the State's population over the same period. That is why I am outraged over the alternatives proposed in the DEIS. The DEIS threatens to cut my community off from the Colorado River and possibly force my municipal water provider to haul water to support current uses, all while allowing other states that share the Colorado River to use more water. The DEIS proposals are unfair and unacceptable. Arizona will not tolerate being treated as "less than" other states. In addition to being unjust, the DEIS alternatives are also illegal in that they entirely ignore the 100-year-old obligations laid out in the Colorado River Compact of 1922 and subsequent laws. Those obligations guarantee the Lower Basin States - Arizona, California, and Nevada - minimum amounts of water. The DEIS does not provide the "hard look" at environmental consequences required by law and threatens to impose unconscionable devastation on the State of Arizona and its people. Reclamation must withdraw this defective DEIS and reissue a document that complies with the law. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

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## Form Letter 5

Form Letter 5 was submitted by American Rivers. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 1,364 submittals of Form Letter 5. Of these, 1,266 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 98 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 5.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 1,364        |
| Form copy                   | 1,266        |
| Form plus                   | 98           |

Form #: 5

Date Received: 02/24/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Dear Bureau of Land Mangement I am writing to encourage the Bureau of Reclamation to combine elements from the proposed alternatives in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to ensure a sustainable future for the Colorado River with new, long-term guidelines that: - Provide clarity and predictability: continued crisis management puts everything and everyone in the basin at risk. New guidelines must promote conservation and respond to conditions on the ground - Incorporate flexible, adaptive tools for conserving, storing, and managing water: new guidelines must allow for more flexibility in how water is stored and moved to protect and stabilize the system - Embed environmental stewardship: the Colorado River is more than a plumbing system. New guidelines must account for the river itself and the bounty of life it sustains. - Provides for meaningful and voluntary Tribal participation grounded in sovereignty and self-determination: the 30 federally recognized Tribes in the Basin must be included in decision-making. - And preserve pathways for advancing in-basin mitigation and continued binational cooperation with Mexico

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## Form Letter 6

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 380 submittals of Form Letter 6. Of these, 366 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 14 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 6.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 380          |
| Form copy                   | 366          |
| Form plus                   | 14           |

Form #: 6

Date Received: 02/24/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Dear Bureau of Reclamation, I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to strengthen the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines for Lake Powell and Lake Mead to fully comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Council on Environmental Quality's environmental justice guidance. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement does not adequately evaluate how proposed operational alternatives may result in disproportionately high and adverse impacts on Latine communities, farmworkers, and low-income households across the Colorado River Basin. Latine workers make up a majority of the agricultural labor force in many Basin states, and water reductions that lead to fallowing or curtailment of irrigation threaten livelihoods, local economies, and food security. The DEIS must also meaningfully assess impacts to traditional and communal water systems, including acequias in Colorado and New Mexico, which function as both critical water infrastructure and living cultural resources. These systems support subsistence agriculture, community governance, and ecological resilience, yet remain vulnerable to federal operational decisions that prioritize rigid allocation frameworks over adaptive management. I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to select an alternative that emphasizes maximum operational flexibility, adaptive management, and transparent coordination among states, indigenous tribes, acequia mayordomos (ditch managers) and comisionados (commissioners), agricultural producers, municipalities, and frontline communities. This approach offers the best opportunity to mitigate harm, avoid inequitable outcomes, and respond effectively to worsening climate conditions. Water management decisions made today will shape the human and natural environment of the Colorado River Basin for generations. Reclamation must ensure that post-2026 operations advance environmental justice, protect cultural resources, and deliver a resilient and equitable water future for all who depend on the Colorado River.

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## Form Letter 7

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 825 submittals of Form Letter 7. Of these, 761 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 64 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 7.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 825          |
| Form copy                   | 761          |
| Form plus                   | 64           |

Form #: 7

Date Received: 02/18/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Dear U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, I'm writing today to ask Reclamation to take immediate and bold action to address the deteriorating conditions on the Colorado River. The existing rules -- that expire at the end of 2026-- were ineffective at protecting water levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead and ensuring water available in the Colorado River to support its people, economies, and ecosystems. As a result, Lake Powell elevations are predicted to reach the critical (minimum power pool) elevation by mid-July of 2026. Reaching critical water levels at Lake Powell not only compromises the ability of the dam to deliver water downstream and generate power but also puts at risk river flows in the Grand Canyon and its cultural and ecological resources. Water uses in the Colorado River Basin need to be rebalanced. The promises made 100 years ago are not attainable in the 21st century given how significantly climate change has reduced water supplies. Further, the new rules need to ensure that tribes and the environment receive an equitable share of the river for the future. The Colorado River and its tributaries are waterways with ecological, spiritual, and cultural significance that should be honored and safeguarded. I urge you to prioritize these values and build a just and sustainable Colorado River Basin by taking the following actions: \* Commence a comprehensive study of Glen Canyon Dam infrastructure to ensure that the dam's design does not prevent adequate flows from being released through the dam as critically low water levels become the norm. \* Work with the Secretary of the Interior to direct and fund the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program to develop a plan for how to operate Glen Canyon Dam to meet the mandates of the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992 when Lake Powell falls below critical elevations (3,525 feet, 3,500 feet, and 3,490 feet). \* Until the infrastructure and operational studies are completed and solutions implemented, prioritize the following to protect Grand Canyon flows and resources: o Follow the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992, which mandates that releases from Glen Canyon Dam protect and improve the cultural and ecological values of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Grand Canyon National Park. This includes protecting the canyon's native fish, beaches, and cultural and archaeological sites. o Maintain Lake Powell water levels above 3,525 feet to ensure high flow experiments, that protect the ecology of the Grand Canyon, can continue to occur. o Until a physical barrier is built to prevent non-native fish from passing through the dam, prioritize keeping Lake Powell above 3,540 feet to limit non-native fish passage. o Commit to continue cool water releases beyond 2027 from Glen Canyon Dam's river outlet works to maintain temperatures that discourage nonnative fish reproduction. If cool mix flows cannot be maintained, keep Lake Powell above 3,570 feet. o Ensure that Glen Canyon Dam releases accommodate the need for variable high and low flows in the canyon, but limit steady high-volume releases to avoid eroding too much sediment from Marble and Grand Canyons.

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## Form Letter 8

Form Letter 8 was submitted by Food & Water Watch. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 3,296 submittals of Form Letter 8. Of these, 3,111 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 185 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 8.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 3,296        |
| Form copy                   | 3,111        |
| Form plus                   | 185          |

Form #: 8

Date Received: 02/25/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Dear Bureau of Reclamation, The Colorado River is in crisis, yet discussions of future management alternatives do not account for how the water is used. The Bureau must use its authority to push the Basin states to reach a joint agreement that accepts the need for mandatory conservation measures limiting corporate water abuses. Overuse by major agribusiness and tech corporations threatens the basin and water supply for 40 million people. Considering this major threat of collapse, any plan going forward must include an immediate halt to the expansion of alfalfa, mega dairies, and data centers, and a significant rollback of the cultivation of crops that consume large quantities of water and are not suited to growth in highly arid climates. The vast majority of water from the Colorado River is used by big agribusiness, primarily for growing alfalfa, a feedstock for cattle on factory farms. Across all seven Basin states, alfalfa farms consumed an estimated 2.1 trillion gallons of water in 2025, enough to supply the Basin's 40 million people with water for nearly 3 and a half years. Mega dairies, which produce significant pollution and threaten drinking water, consumed 82 billion gallons of water in 2022 across the Basin states (excluding Wyoming, for which no data were available). These agricultural uses are not efficient. Basin states applied 2.6 acre feet of water/acre - 70% higher than the US average - for crops ill-suited to arid climates. Finally, big technology companies across the Basin states are deploying water-hungry data centers with little regulation or regard for impacts on water resources. With the Colorado River significantly overstretched, every environmental analysis and plan for the future must consider how the River's resources are being used. The overuse of the Colorado River by big agribusiness and technology corporations - amid already record-low water levels and drought - has serious consequences that threaten accessible drinking water for 40 million people. I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to prioritize sustainability and the needs of the 40 million people relying on the Colorado River for drinking water over corporate profit.

# *Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

## Form Letter 9

Form Letter 9 was submitted by the Glen Canyon Institute. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 179 submittals of Form Letter 9. Of these, 60 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 119 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 9.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 175          |
| Form copy                   | 60           |
| Form plus                   | 115          |

Form #: 9

Date Received: 02/25/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . To whom it may concern, I'm writing to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. This Draft fails to meet its stated purpose and need, as it ignores options that would provide operational flexibility and environmental benefits. Specifically, the new Colorado River guidelines must: - Analyze river-level bypass of Glen Canyon Dam to ensure naturalized flows through the Grand Canyon, continue Glen Canyon's ecological restoration, and provide maximum operational flexibility in the system. The dam has become a liability preventing water from flowing downstream. Failing to study river-level bypass needlessly limits options for the river, its users, and its ecosystems. - Study a "Fill Mead First" option, prioritizing water storage in Lake Mead before Powell. Today's hydrology cannot fill either Lake Mead and Lake Powell. Given this reality, it doesn't make sense to continue drowning the national park-caliber canyons in Glen. Analyzing different variations of a one-reservoir option would benefit the ecosystems and management of the entire Basin. - Acknowledge the extensive emerging resources in Glen Canyon. In the years since Lake Powell reservoir has declined, there has been an amazing reemergence of wonders like Cathedral in the Desert and Gregory Natural Bridge, as well as vital riparian ecosystems, cultural sites, and new recreation opportunities. These resources must be given equal value to other resources across the Basin. - Require curtailment plans from each state, and prohibit new non-Tribal diversions. Federal agencies must take the supply and demand crisis seriously, imploring each state to produce plans to reduce demand. These agencies should also put a moratorium on new water diversions, with the exception of Tribes with senior water rights. Thank you for your consideration. Evan Krogh 760.420.8920 Krogh760@gmail.com

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## Form Letter 10

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 379 submittals of Form Letter 10. Of these, 91 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 212 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 10.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 303          |
| Form copy                   | 91           |
| Form plus                   | 212          |

Form #: 10

Date Received: 02/26/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . The Colorado River's future depends on bold action, not incremental adjustments. We need a management framework that protects clean water, communities, and ecosystems for generations to come. The Bureau has the opportunity to take meaningful action now to address the full reality of climate-driven water scarcity and the urgent need to protect water quality, ecosystems, and Basin communities. I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to significantly strengthen the Post-2026 Colorado River Basin Draft EIS that proactively addresses the crisis that we face and ensure the public has an opportunity to comment on its revised proposal before issuing its final decision. The Colorado River is already overallocated and shrinking. The Bureau must prioritize long-term sustainability, meaningful Tribal consultation, and enforceable reductions in demand, not simply identify new ways to divide a declining supply.

I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to strengthen the Draft EIS by:

Centering climate science and realistic supply projections

Protecting water quality and reducing pollution impacts as flows decline

Preventing further ecological collapse in the Colorado River Delta and Basin tributaries

Respecting Tribal water rights and ensuring meaningful Tribal consultation

Prioritizing demand reduction and conservation over unsustainable allocations

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## Form Letter 12

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 4 submittals of Form Letter 12. All 4 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 12.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 4            |
| Form plus                   | 4            |

Form #: 12

Date Received: 02/22/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Bureau of Reclamation, Attn: BCOO-1000 Project: Post-2026 Operational Guidelines for Lake Powell & Lake Mead Date: February 20, 2026 I am submitting this comment during the 45-day public comment period regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's post-2026 Colorado River operations and associated environmental review documents. I am a Nevada resident and ratepayer with a direct interest in the long-term reliability, equity, and feasibility of Colorado River management decisions. While I recognize the complexity of post-2026 operations, I am concerned that the alternatives under consideration rely too heavily on incremental demand reductions while insufficiently addressing the Basin's documented, long-term (and growing) structural supply deficit. As the United Nations University has stated, "If the Southwest were a business, it would be in Chapter 11." In a nation defined by abundance and achievement--a nation that built Hoover Dam, spanned a continent by rail, constructed the Interstate Highway System, created the Tennessee Valley Authority, reached the moon, and unlocked the atomic age--it is difficult to accept that in the 21st century our future is framed primarily as permanent restriction: to shrink, limit growth, mine aquifers, strip landscapes, and accept a declining quality of life--not because solutions are impossible, but because we have not yet chosen to implement them. Meanwhile, hundreds of millions of acre-feet of freshwater continue to flow unused to the oceans each year from major river systems such as the Mississippi and Columbia. Despite decades of effort, the seven basin states have largely managed decline--mortgaging our future and kicking the can down the road. America has never solved its greatest challenges by retreating. We are a world superpower with a history of "can-do." Is this truly the best we can do? In the twentieth century, economic strength often followed access to oil reserves. In the twenty-first century, resilience and growth are increasingly tied to access to reliable freshwater supplies. Regions with dependable water attract industry, stabilize housing markets, sustain agriculture, and support energy production. Regions without reliability face rising costs and constrained growth. As Eric Kuhn, retired GM of the Colorado River Water Conservation District, stated in the Las Vegas Review-Journal on 2/15/26: "We are in a new era of deficit...where bold action...is required." My proposed BOLD solution below would, at a minimum: Add \$500 billion to \$1 trillion in cumulative regional economic growth Create 20,000 direct construction jobs Create tens of thousands of additional direct jobs Create hundreds of thousands of indirect and induced jobs Create a strategic economic asset with annual value exceeding \$1.24 trillion through development of millions of new housing units The Core Problem Is Structural, Not Behavioral The Colorado River crisis is not fundamentally a conservation problem. It is a structural supply failure caused by overallocation based on faulty hydrology, long-term climate-driven aridification, rapid population growth, groundwater depletion, and the physical limits of existing infrastructure. The system was designed for a river that no longer exists. When the Colorado River Compact was signed in 1922, it assumed an average annual flow of approximately 16.4 million acre-feet and treated drought as temporary. Today, long-term flows are closer to 12 million acre-feet, creating a permanent structural mismatch between legal commitments and physical supply--approximately 5.5 million acre-feet per year. For decades, reservoir storage masked this imbalance. Today, those reserves are declining. Modern pressures have intensified the challenge. The Basin is experiencing aridification rather than cyclical drought: rising temperatures dry soils before runoff reaches rivers, increase evaporation, and reduce effective snowpack. Meanwhile, the population of basin states has grown from approximately 2.8 million in 1922 to more than 60 million today. Demand has increased even as supply has declined. Infrastructure operates within physical limits. Reservoirs such as Lake Mead and Lake Powell do not decline gradually forever; they approach functional thresholds. If water levels drop too low, hydropower generation becomes unreliable and

downstream deliveries are jeopardized. Current forecasts indicate that the system continues trending downward. Consider the following: In SNWA's 2024-2029 Water Conservation Plan, GM John Entsminger states: "Over the past two decades, evolving hydraulic conditions have led to diminished inflows to the Colorado River system and Lake Mead...Today, crucial storage reserves hover at historically low levels, posing a serious threat to water supply security for much of the West." Bureau of Reclamation modeling suggests Colorado River flows could decline by approximately 5-10% under conservative projections, 15-25% under mid-range scenarios, and 30-45% under higher warming conditions by 2050. Taken together, these forecasts confirm the system's challenges are not episodic but structural--reinforcing the need to evaluate long-term supply strategies alongside demand management measures. According to Reclamation's February 9, 2026 Hydrologic Update, projected inflow for the 2026 water year fell from 72% of normal to 52% of normal. The likely outcome of continued decline is emergency water management--water trucking at extreme costs, agricultural collapse measured in billions annually, housing value exposure measured in trillions, and rising federal disaster spending that grows faster than infrastructure investment. Planned water is cheaper than emergency water. Conservation Alone Cannot Solve This Conservation, while essential, reduces demand but does not create supply. It cannot refill reservoirs or restore depleted aquifers. Large-scale desalination faces constraints of cost and scale; even significant investment may struggle to close the system-wide deficit. It has been estimated that resolving the shortfall would require dozens of desalination plants costing many tens of billions--and none have been built at that scale. We cannot conserve our way out of this. Conservation and water cuts decide who must use less water; they do not create new water. Conservation is like a sponge--you can only get so much out of it. The Deeper Warning: Groundwater Depletion The Southwest is increasingly water-depleted, particularly in groundwater reserves. Since 2003, the Colorado River Basin has lost approximately 27.8 million acre-feet of groundwater--roughly comparable to Lake Mead's storage capacity. Groundwater is disappearing much faster than surface water. When groundwater and surface water losses are combined, total depletion across the Basin is estimated at approximately 42.3 million acre-feet. This represents a major reduction in long-term reserves. NASA's GRACE satellite data indicates the Basin has lost on the order of 52 cubic kilometers of total freshwater storage since the early 2000s--about 42 million acre-feet when converted. Groundwater represents the largest share of this loss. In short, the region has not merely reduced annual river flows--it has drawn down tens of millions of acre-feet from natural storage systems that took thousands of years to accumulate. Many aquifers take centuries to recharge, if recharge occurs at all. Declining groundwater also increases drilling costs and can contribute to land subsidence. The System-Wide Scale All seven basin states--along with Texas and Mexico--have been experiencing water stress for decades. Their deficits can be measured two ways: water lost from long-term storage (aquifers, reservoirs, soil moisture), and cuts from legal allocations to prevent collapse. To refill the broader water systems of the seven basin states, Texas, and Mexico would require approximately 270 million acre-feet. The Colorado River system supports roughly 40 million people and irrigates millions of acres of farmland. Without additional supply, risks include infrastructure failure, energy instability, agricultural contraction, municipal restrictions, and increased federal intervention under emergency conditions. Freshwater Abundance Exists--But Not the Infrastructure to Move It The United States does not lack freshwater in absolute terms; it lacks infrastructure to move it where it is needed most. The Mississippi and Columbia Rivers discharge enormous volumes of freshwater into the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean each year--on the order of hundreds of millions of acre-feet. Freshwater is increasingly recognized as "Blue Gold," a strategic economic and security asset. Water has no substitute; cities and economies cannot function without it. In arid regions, reliable water supply directly determines housing growth, agricultural output, industrial investment, and energy stability. This shift is not theoretical. In 2020, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange introduced a water futures market, reflecting growing recognition that water scarcity carries measurable financial value. THE SOLUTION: WATER PIPELINE(S) + BASIN-SCALE GOVERNANCE Addressing this

challenge requires both governance reform and new infrastructure. I propose establishing a Western Water Authority (WWA), modeled on the TVA, to coordinate basin-wide planning and implementation (including Texas and Mexico coordination where relevant). Its mission would include moving water through conveyance systems, stabilizing reservoirs, supporting groundwater recharge, protecting ecosystems, and establishing rational pricing structures. The United States has built millions of miles of pipelines to move oil, gas, water, wastewater, and other resources, demonstrating national capability to transport critical resources across long distances when priorities demand it. Not building a pipeline is like driving slower to conserve fuel while refusing to build the road that would get you to the gas station. China is building the largest water conveyance system in the world!! China's South-North Water Transfer Project is the largest water conveyance system ever built, designed to move water from the country's wetter southern regions to its arid northern population and agricultural centers. Constructed over several decades at an estimated cost of roughly \$80 to \$100 billion, the system consists of multiple major routes spanning distances of up to 1,000 miles or more. Traversing mountain ranges as high as 10,000 to 15,000 feet. Done in phases and still under construction, it will take many years to complete. The project is designed to deliver about 36 million acre-feet per year, roughly three times the average annual flow of the Colorado River. Across the system, average delivery costs are generally estimated in the range of \$700 to \$1,200 per acre-foot. Today, the system demonstrates how large-scale infrastructure can address long-term regional imbalances between water availability and demand. Potential infrastructure strategies could include pipelines linking surplus river systems (Mississippi and Columbia), expanded reuse, aquifer storage and recovery, and integration with energy systems such as solar generation and small modular reactors. In this model, water would be managed as a grid--stored in wet periods and moved strategically in dry ones. The technology exists. The WWA could be established by Congress as a federally chartered interstate compact with basin-wide operational authority. Governed by a board representing basin states, federal agencies, Tribal nations, agricultural users, urban utilities, and environmental stakeholders, the WWA would replace fragmented management with an integrated system capable of planning, financing, building, and operating water infrastructure across the Colorado River Basin. Its responsibilities would include designing and operating regional conveyance systems (pipelines, recharge canals, storage hubs) capable of moving water from seasonal surpluses, recycled municipal supply, desalination exchange sources, or flood flows into depleted aquifers and declining reservoirs--redistributing water across the region much like electricity is transmitted today. The WWA would also manage Lakes Mead and Powell as strategic storage assets, maintaining elevations above critical thresholds (power pool and shortage triggers) through coordinated supplemental inflows, forecast-based releases, and system balancing. A major function of the WWA would be large-scale groundwater recharge systems to transform aquifers from mined resources into managed water banks--through spreading basins, injection wells, and seasonal recharge canals. For example, recharge of 2 million acre-feet annually for 20 years would restore 40 million acre-feet--comparable to the groundwater depletion measured since the early 2000s. Financially, the WWA could operate on a self-supporting model similar to the TVA, using delivery fees, storage contracts, recharge credits, and infrastructure bonds. For instance, managing 5 million acre-feet annually at an average system fee of \$300 per acre-foot would generate approximately \$1.5 billion per year in operating revenue. This project is legally viable because Congress has plenary power over interstate commerce and has repeatedly exercised authority over interstate water and power infrastructure. Courts upheld federal authority in the development of Hoover Dam and the TVA. Treaty authority and binational desalination exchange frameworks with Mexico provide additional precedent. Conclusion The lesson of America's greatest public works is simple: when essential systems fail, ideology must give way to engineering. Water is now one of those systems. The question is not whether federal intervention will occur, but whether it will be deliberate and intelligent--or forced by failure. Conservation helps manage scarcity but does not resolve structural deficits. Without new sources of water and basin-scale infrastructure,

the Southwest faces a future defined by permanent shortfall rather than temporary drought. The longer we wait, the more expensive it becomes. In closing, further detail on any of the above is available upon request. Thank you for your time.

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 13

Form Letter 13 was submitted by Save the Colorado. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 5 submittals of Form Letter 13. Of these, 3 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 2 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 13.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 5            |
| Form copy                   | 3            |
| Form plus                   | 2            |

Form #: 13

Date Received: 02/26/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Dear U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Please accept this letter as public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the "Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead." In the Final EIS: 1) the ecological health of the river must be placed at the center of management, 2) Reclamation must adopt solutions that are long-term, equitable, sustainable, and actually solve the problems on the Colorado River rather than kick the can down the road, and 3) the river needs to be "fixed" using Nature-Based Solutions that are also "climate action" to mitigate, and allow adaptation to, climate change that scientists argue will further decrease flows in the future. Long-term, equitable, sustainable solutions in the EIS should include: 1. Creating a "Grand Canyon Restoration Alternative" that is a "one dam solution" that includes bypassing and decommissioning Glen Canyon Dam, and storing all of the Colorado River's water in Mead Reservoir instead of Powell. 2. Stopping all proposed new dams, diversions and pipelines in the entire basin that will further deplete the river. 3. Enacting conservation programs to save Mead Reservoir. 4. Letting 10% of the river's total water flow into and through its Delta to the Sea of Cortez in Mexico to sequester carbon in Delta wetlands and mangroves and restore the wildlife habitat. 5. Allocating Native American water rights by subtracting that water from current diversions, or, by paying tribes to keep their water in the river. 6. Distributing water allocations to all users based on the percentage of total flow available each year, not a fixed amount.

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 15

Form Letter 15 was submitted by the Sierra Club. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 760 submittals of Form Letter 15. There were 0 submittals considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 15.**

| Unit                        | Count |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Total number of submissions | 760   |
| Form plus                   | 760   |

Form #: 15

Date Received: 03/02/2026

Organizations:

Dear United States Bureau of Reclamation, Protect the Colorado River for Climate-Forward Water Management, Stronger Conservation requirements, Respect for Tribal Water Rights, Protection for the Grand Canyon and Endangered species, Equitable and realistic shortage sharing, Planning for Worst-Case Scenarios. Dear Bureau of Reclamation, The ongoing mega-drought demands bold, science-based action to protect the Colorado River system for future generations. We need a strong approach that provides an actionable framework for safeguarding critical infrastructure, protecting endangered species and the Grand Canyon, maintaining ecosystem function, and ensuring climate resilience. None of these proposed alternatives fully address the impacts that will result from a dead pool situation. This is a serious omission that Reclamation needs to address in the Final EIS. We also urge the Bureau to use its considerable influence with the States to expand greater conservation efforts. There is less water now to use than there was, and there will be even less in the future. We need to adapt a new way of thinking, using a lot less water and rethinking how "beneficial use" is defined. I urge you to adopt a science-based, climate-resilient approach that:

- Requires significantly stronger conservation across all sectors
- Ensures equitable and implementable shortage sharing
- Protects the Grand Canyon and endangered species
- Maintains ecosystem function throughout the basin
- Fully respects Tribal sovereignty and senior water rights
- Reexamines outdated assumptions about "beneficial use" in a hotter, drier future

The Colorado River is in crisis, and the decisions you make now will determine whether this river system can survive for future generations. This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 16

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 3 submittals of Form Letter 16. Of these, 1 was a form copy, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 2 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 16.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 3            |
| Form copy                   | 1            |
| Form plus                   | 2            |

Form #: 16

Date Received: 02/26/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to significantly strengthen the Post-2026 Colorado River Basin Draft EIS that proactively addresses the crisis that we face and ensure the public has an opportunity to comment on its revised proposal before issuing its final decision. The Colorado River is already overallocated and shrinking. The Bureau must prioritize long-term sustainability, meaningful Tribal consultation, and enforceable reductions in demand, not simply identify new ways to divide a declining supply. The Colorado River cannot afford a delay.

# *Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

## Form Letter 17

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 10 submittals of Form Letter 17. Of these, 2 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 8 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 17.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 10           |
| Form copy                   | 2            |
| Form plus                   | 8            |

Form #: 17

Date Received: 02/26/2026

Organizations:

#### DOI - . Our Drinking Water Is at Risk

The Colorado River provides drinking water for 40 million people, supports Tribal nations, sustains farms and cities, and is the lifeblood of fragile desert ecosystems.

But the Basin is facing:

Record-low reservoir levels

Increasing salinity and pollution risks

Collapsing aquatic habitats

Rising temperatures and reduced snowpack

Growing threats to safe, reliable water supplies

This EIS must reflect the reality of climate-driven water scarcity and prioritize clean water protections, ecosystem health, and equitable solutions, not simply divide up a shrinking supply.

The Draft EIS the Bureau has proposed is inadequate to address the crisis that we face, and the agency has failed to reveal what its preferred alternative will be.

This denies the public the only real opportunity we will have to comment on the inadequacies of the Bureau's proposal before a final decision is made.

We demand that our communities have a full opportunity to express our concerns before the government takes final action.

#### The Solutions We Need

We urge the Bureau of Reclamation to strengthen the Draft EIS by:

Centering climate science and realistic supply projections

Protecting water quality and reducing pollution impacts as flows decline

Preventing further ecological collapse in the Colorado River Delta and Basin tributaries

Respecting Tribal water rights and ensuring meaningful Tribal consultation

Prioritizing demand reduction and conservation over unsustainable allocations

Please consider these recommendations!

Please also STOP unchecked development of housing and services in these water scarce areas! Thank you.

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 18

Form Letter 18 was submitted by the Great Basin Water Network. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 23 submittals of Form Letter 18. Of these, 1 was a form copy, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 22 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 18.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 23           |
| Form copy                   | 1            |
| Form plus                   | 22           |

Form #: 18

Date Received: 02/27/2026

Organizations:

Great Basin Water Network DOI - . The document fails to consider the following:

The DEIS ignores the complete geographic scope, and the impacts of that narrowed scope from curtailments, inaction, and limited action in directly affected communities in the Lower Colorado River Basin.

Air quality impacts on communities are too narrowly reviewed in the Technical Appendices. The DEIS avoids addressing those direct impacts that will result from the alternatives in the DEIS.

Water quality impacts on communities are too narrowly reviewed in the Technical Appendices. The DEIS avoids addressing those direct impacts that will result from the alternatives in the DEIS.

Water availability impacts on communities in the Lower Colorado River Basin are too narrowly reviewed in the Technical Appendices. The DEIS avoids addressing those direct impacts that will result from the alternatives in the DEIS.

Impacts on Lower Region MSCP (27 species including listed Endangered Species) are too narrowly reviewed in the Technical Appendices. The DEIS avoids addressing those direct impacts that will result from the alternatives in the DEIS.

Socioeconomic impacts on communities are too narrowly reviewed in the Technical Appendices. The DEIS avoids addressing those direct impacts on Lower Colorado River communities that will result from the alternatives in the DEIS.

Impacts on recreation facilities, refugia, park service units, federal infrastructure, and directly connected waterways of the Colorado River System are too narrowly reviewed in the Technical Appendices.

Three Alternatives Do Not Likely Comply With The Law Of The River. Programmatic Review Is Necessary And So Is Congressional Action

In Appendix C, the DEIS implies that modeling justifying three of the proposals "may not be implementable" because potential non-compliance with "laws, contracts, agreements, and other authorities that are part of the Colorado River

legal and contractual framework referred to as Law of the River." That is a reference to the Enhanced Coordination, Maximum Operational Flexibility, and Supply Driven Alternative. Without any deal in place among the states or congressional action, a Record

of Decision supporting those alternatives poses legal challenges that may be insurmountable.

Therefore, according to the DEIS, the No Action Alternative and Basic Coordination Alternative are among the only options that could avoid a legal challenge after a Record of Decision.

Those options pose some of the worst outcomes for Lakes Powell and Mead. We believe that no course of action as put forth in the DEIS is a sufficient means of stabilizing the system under the current Law of the River framework. This

is troubling considering Reclamation is predicting some of the most dire reservoir elevations ever in the coming two years.

Reclamation should undertake a programmatic review as the states continue negotiating. This year's low flows will inevitably get people back to the negotiating table in a meaningful way. Congress will act when the reservoirs are in

crisis. We have seen congressional, bi-partisan action multiple times in the past seven years. When Congress is ready, enlist the National Academy of Sciences to undertake a programmatic review in partnership with the Department of Interior, Reclamation and

other cooperating agencies. This document is not the beginning of the end. We believe it is merely the end of the beginning.

## The DEIS Fails To Consider Impacts On Irretrievable Resources By Sanctioning The Repurposing Of Water Resources

The DEIS offers multiple alternatives that impose varying levels of cuts in the Lower Basin and no meaningful cuts in the Upper Basin. Some alternatives mention the possibility of Upper Basin "conservation" but those offerings do

not describe who, what, where and when. There is nothing steadfast for cuts in the Upper Basin. The DEIS also showcases a modified version of the 2016 Upper Basin Depletion Schedule that still assumes considerable new uses of water in the Upper Basin in the coming decades. Because of the limited resources available, there's no doubting that cuts imposed on the Lower Basin will be repurposed by the Upper Basin. That repurposing defeats the intent of this analysis. Once that water is re-appropriated by Upper Basin regulators, waters with established beneficial uses will not return to where those uses were first proven in the Lower Basin. This is highly suspect.

Furthermore, we question how Reclamation can execute its recognized authority to force a curtailment in one basin but not even questioning how development of new appropriations in another part of the basin will impact the whole system

and those who had to undertake curtailment. Upper Basin reservoirs are subject to the "apportionments" among the two basins, seven states and Mexico (See Colorado River Storage Project Act, Pub. L. No. 84-485, SS 4, 70 Stat. 107 (1956)). Reclamation has a great

deal of say in how certain rights are managed in the system. But how can regulators sequester the differences between the starting and end points of a highly connected system where some users have established decades worth of use? This gray area is at the

heart of the ongoing conflict among the seven states, and we request more information on this in the FEIS.

We fear that it is an unacceptable practice to allow the Upper Basin to repurpose water from Lower Basin in the name of state-led permitting efforts in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. Further declines in the system will challenge

Reclamation's mission to protect infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities. It means less water making its way through the southern reaches of the system in the majority of years if current trends continue. Every state needs a curtailment plan on the Colorado

River. This DEIS fails to compel the Upper Basin States to meaningfully consider how they will act to protect federal assets and resources.

Finally, this could also bring about conflict over tribal water rights in the Upper and Lower Basins -- especially where settlements have been established. There must be consideration of reducing, at a 1-for-1 rate, junior non-tribal

use for those senior tribal rights that have not yet been put to use. How Reclamation would undertake this matter in the Upper and Lower Basin must be included in any FEIS. Also, there must be consideration of how Reclamation would prevent new Upper Basin appropriations

put forth by non-native water users from using, in a de facto sense, settled and adjudicated rights of Lower Basin tribes. DEIS Ignores Glen Canyon Dam's Antique Plumbing

The analysis in the DEIS fails to consider bypass, decommissioning, and other meaningful resolutions available at Glen Canyon Dam, which poses considerable concerns for water delivery and endangered species protections. We understand

and respect the legal arguments for not including the One-Dam Alternative. But it is a mistake to not undertake comprehensive analysis on this matter. Keeping Lake Powell's elevations above 3550', 3525, and 3490' are not realistic scenarios for the long-term.

Failure to include greater analysis on Glen Canyon Dam's river outlet works will ultimately cost us all -- imposing direct impacts on Lake Mead, Hoover Dam, other federal infrastructure, metropolitan areas, agricultural hubs, tribal resources, sensitive species,

National Park Service units, U.S. Fish and Wildlife units, and other conservation areas in the Lower Basin.

The DEIS' Purpose-And-Need Is Too Narrow And Segments Requisite Reviews Reclamation, admittedly so in its Purpose and Need statement, recognizes the grave uncertainties we face if conditions do not improve on the river system. Reclamation also recognizes the direct connections the DEIS makes with upstream

infrastructure associated with the Colorado River Storage Project units and in Lower Basin units at Parker Dam, Davis Dam, Imperial Dam, and Palo Verde. The DEIS would benefit from greater analyses in the technical appendices dealing with directly related

impacts at the dams during low-flow periods. The same can be said for analyzing impacts at all Colorado River Storage Project facilities in low-flow periods too. They will be essential for propping up Lakes Powell and Mead. What will operations look like if

CRSP and Lower Basin Infrastructure are only operating collectively at 10-20 percent of normal? What can we expect? To say that management at Mead and Powell are not directly connected to that management is implausible.

If you have any additional questions please contact me.(c) Great Basin Water Network. Powered by weForms.

# *Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

## Form Letter 19

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 1 submittal of Form Letter 19. The submittal was a form copy, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 19.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 1            |
| Form copy                   | 1            |

Form #: 19

Date Received: 03/02/2026

Organizations:

DOI - . Dear Bureau of Reclamation, The Colorado River currently supports 40 million people and \$1.4 trillion in annual economic activity in seven U.S. states and Mexico -- but the current legal framework does not take into account the fact that the river's flow has declined by about 20% over the last century as climate change has made the West increasingly arid. In 2022, water levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead (the Lower Basin's other major reservoir), dropped to historic lows, which look set to be exceeded this year as a result of record-low snow-pack this winter. Consequently, the water levels in Lake Powell this summer may be too low to support the generation of hydroelectricity. Clearly, it is time to re-think water usage over the length of the Colorado River: "business as usual" is not an option. In particular, the Bureau of Reclamation should use its authority to impel the Basin states to accept the need for mandatory conservation measures that limit wasteful and inappropriate uses of water in this arid environment. At present, the majority of water from the Colorado River is used by large-scale agribusinesses for growing alfalfa for dairy farms: in 2025, alfalfa farms across all seven Basin states consumed approximately 2.1 trillion gallons of water--enough to supply the Basin's 40 million people with water for nearly 3.5 years. Furthermore, in 2022 alone, the large-scale dairies that consume this alfalfa used an additional 82 billion gallons of water in the Basin states. In the arid west, this level of consumption is simply not sustainable--particularly since these large dairies are also a significant source of nitrate pollution that threatens the safety of drinking water for millions of people (as well as being one of the major producers of methane--a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide and a substantial contributor to climate change). Not only is this type of agriculture inappropriate for the arid west, but so too are the water-intensive large-scale data centers that are being installed across the Basin states by large "Big Tech" companies--again, with little regulation or regard for impacts on the water resources that are needed to support existing communities along the entire the length of the river. In short, with the Colorado River already significantly overstretched, environmental analyses and plans for the future must consider how the River's resources are being used, and how the climate crisis is likely to affect those resources in the future. Proposed plans should include an immediate halt to the expansion of alfalfa production, large-scale dairies, and data centers, as well as significant reductions in the cultivation of other crops that consume large quantities of water and which are not suited to these highly arid climates. The overuse of the Colorado River by large-scale agri-businesses and technology corporations--amid already record-low water levels and drought--has serious consequences that threaten accessible drinking water for 40 million people. Please take these factors into account when considering future management options. Thank-you I urge the Bureau of Reclamation to prioritize sustainability and the needs of the 40 million people relying on the Colorado River for drinking water over corporate profit.

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 20

Form Letter 20 was submitted by the BlueRibbon Coalition. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 8,954 submittals of Form Letter 20. Of these, 5,448 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text. The remaining 3,506 submittals were considered form plus letters, defined as the original submittal with additional text unique to the sender.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 20.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 8,954        |
| Form copy                   | 5,448        |
| Form plus                   | 3,506        |

Form #: 20

Date Received: 03/05/2026

Organizations:

I Support Recreation on the Colorado River Basin I am writing as a supporter and user of Lake Powell, Lake Mead and water in the west. I am a concerned citizen and supporter of responsible water and energy infrastructure management. I am writing regarding the proposed alternatives for the Post-2026 Colorado River Operation Guidelines. It is important to recognize the role that the dams within the Colorado River Basin play in ensuring energy reliability, irrigation, water storage, navigation, and regional economic stability. I appreciate the Bureau of Reclamation recognizing BlueRibbon Coalition's Path to 3588' Plan as an alternative considered and recreation as a whole in alternatives analyzed. Glen Canyon and Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Basin, face growing pressure from radical environmental activists and anti-dam interests who seek its decommissioning. These calls threaten the dam's essential functions on the Colorado River system, therefore we appreciate BOR recognizing that moving to a one dam system would not yield a resilient system and would be bad for the environment and the economy. As a recreation user, I support any alternative that recognizes and supports recreational opportunities within the Colorado River Basin. The Supply-Driven, Max Operational Flexibility and Enhanced Coordination Alternatives all identify release levels based off of low water levels, shortages or low inflows which will better protect the dams critical infrastructure. I support any alternative or blend of alternatives in which releases are based off of real water inflows and not maximum deliveries that could hurt the water storage system and ultimately recreation. I support keeping the most water in the reservoirs for recreation as possible. The nation cannot afford to treat these critical infrastructure assets as bargaining chips in speculative environmental campaigns. Lake Powell and Lake Mead are too important to lose, and its operation must be protected. Post-2026 Colorado River

# *Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

## Form Letter 21

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 4 submittals of Form Letter 21. All 4 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 21.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 4            |
| Form copy                   | 4            |

Form #: 21

Date Received: 12/04/2024

Organizations:

I Support Recreation on the Colorado River Basin I am writing as a supporter and user of Lake Powell and water in the west. I am a concerned citizen and supporter of responsible water and energy infrastructure management. I am writing regarding the proposed alternatives for the Post-2026 Colorado River Operation Guidelines. It is important to recognize the role that the dams within the Colorado River Basin play in ensuring energy reliability, irrigation, water storage, navigation, and regional economic stability. I appreciate the Bureau of Reclamation recognizing BlueRibbon Coalition's Path to 3588' Plan as an alternative considered and recreation as a whole in alternatives analyzed. Glen Canyon and Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Basin, face growing pressure from radical environmental activists and anti-dam interests who seek its decommissioning. These calls threaten the dam's essential functions on the Colorado River system, therefore we appreciate BOR recognizing that moving to a one dam system would not yield a resilient system and would be bad for the environment and the economy. As a native born resident of Page Arizona and a recreation user, I support any alternative that recognizes and supports recreational opportunities and economy within the Colorado River Basin. The Supply-Driven, Max Operational Flexibility and Enhanced Coordination Alternatives all identify release levels based off of low water levels, shortages or low inflows which will better protect the dams critical infrastructure. I support any alternative or blend of alternatives in which releases are based off of real water inflows and not maximum deliveries that could hurt the water storage system and ultimately recreation and economy. I support keeping the most water in the reservoirs for recreation as possible. It is important for local economy as well as safety response and navigation The nation cannot afford to treat these critical infrastructure assets as bargaining chips in speculative environmental campaigns. Lake Powell and Lake Mead are too important to lose, and its operation must be protected for future generations to make fond memories as I have since childhood and now with my own family. Lake Powell has been a major impact on my life as a native born resident of Page Arizona. Many aspects of my life are tied to Lake Powell, and quite possibly my very existence. I was raised here and raising my own family here. Many of my fondest memories were made on Lake Powell. It's quite literally my favorite place on Earth. I believe many people can say the same. It's perhaps the greatest Fusion of nature's beauty and creativity of man. I hope any generations to come will benefit as I have.

Post-2026 Colorado River

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 22

Form Letter 22 was submitted by the Blue Ribbon Coalition. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 4 submittals of Form Letter 1. All 4 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 22.**

| Unit                        | Count |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Total number of submissions | 4     |
| Form copy                   | 4     |

Form #: 22

Date Received: 12/04/2024

Organizations:

I Support Recreation on the Colorado River Basin I am writing as a supporter and user of Lake Powell, Lake Mead and water in the west. I am a concerned citizen and supporter of responsible water and energy infrastructure management. I am writing regarding the proposed alternatives for the Post-2026 Colorado River Operation Guidelines. It is important to recognize the role that the dams within the Colorado River Basin play in ensuring energy reliability, irrigation, water storage, navigation, and regional economic stability. I appreciate the Bureau of Reclamation recognizing BlueRibbon Coalition's Path to 3588' Plan as an alternative considered and recreation as a whole in alternatives analyzed. Glen Canyon and Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Basin, face growing pressure from radical environmental activists and anti-dam interests who seek its decommissioning. These calls threaten the dam's essential functions on the Colorado River system, therefore we appreciate BOR recognizing that moving to a one dam system would not yield a resilient system and would be bad for the environment and the economy. As a recreation user, I support any alternative that recognizes and supports recreational opportunities within the Colorado River Basin. The Supply-Driven, Max Operational Flexibility and Enhanced Coordination Alternatives all identify release levels based off of low water levels, shortages or low inflows which will better protect the dams critical infrastructure. I support any alternative or blend of alternatives in which releases are based off of real water inflows and not maximum deliveries that often hurt the water storage system, ecosystems, local economies, recreational activities, provide for food, and ultimately the environment. I support keeping the most water in the reservoirs for these activities as possible. The nation cannot afford to treat these critical infrastructure assets as bargaining chips in speculative environmental campaigns. Lake Powell and Lake Mead are too important to lose, and its operation must be protected. We have gone too far and tools long with coastal states fully draining the inland states. It's time they provide for their own citizens instead of contributing to the tragedy of the commons. They have access to the more than 70 percent of water in the world and coastal states carry 80 percent of the population. They should immediately stop draining the 2.8 percent of freshwater available. How this has gone on so long is ludicrous. Post-2026 Colorado River

# Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement

## Form Letter 23

Form Letter 23 was submitted by the Blue Ribbon Coalition. In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 4 submittals of Form Letter 23. All 4 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 23.**

| Unit                        | Count |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Total number of submissions | 4     |
| Form copy                   | 4     |

Form #: 23

Date Received: 12/04/2024

Organizations:

I Support Sustainability and Recreation on the Colorado River Basin I am writing as a supporter and user of Lake Powell, Lake Mead and water in the west. I am a concerned citizen and supporter of responsible water and energy infrastructure management. I am writing regarding the proposed alternatives for the Post-2026 Colorado River Operation Guidelines. It is important to recognize the role that the dams within the Colorado River Basin play in ensuring energy reliability, irrigation, water storage, navigation, and regional economic stability. I appreciate the Bureau of Reclamation recognizing BlueRibbon Coalition's Path to 3588' Plan as an alternative considered and recreation as a whole in alternatives analyzed. Glen Canyon and Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Basin, face growing pressure from radical environmental activists and anti-dam interests who seek its decommissioning. These calls threaten the dam's essential functions on the Colorado River system, therefore we appreciate BOR recognizing that moving to a one dam system would not yield a resilient system and would be bad for the environment and the economy. As a recreation user, I support the Max Operational Flexibility Coordination Alternative all identify release levels based off of low water levels, shortages or low inflows which will better protect the dams critical infrastructure. I support any alternative or blend of alternatives in which releases are based off of real water inflows and not maximum deliveries that could hurt the water storage system and recreation. The nation cannot afford to treat these critical infrastructure assets as bargaining chips in speculative environmental campaigns. Lake Powell and Lake Mead are too important to lose, and its operation must be protected. I am passionate about the outdoors and informed about current water scarcity issues in our state of Utah. I graduated from SUU with a B.S. in Outdoor Recreation in Parks and Tourism, with a minor in sustainability studies. I believe that the alternative that is mentioned above would be the best current management strategy for this complex situation. I value recreation, but understand first hand the consequences of the drought in the western United States. That is why I propose implementing Max Operational Flexibility Coordination Alternative which is the most proactive proposal with out adding to or destroying the current infrastructure. Post-2026 Colorado River

# *Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

## Form Letter 24

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 4 submittals of Form Letter 24. All 4 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 24.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 4            |
| Form copy                   | 4            |

Form #: 24

Date Received: 12/04/2024

Organizations:

I Support Recreation on the Colorado River Basin I am a simple man who believes is doing what is right for humanity, full stop. The continued politicizing of life sustaining issues has to stop. Please, step up and be men for a change who stand for what is needed. The very fact we have to have public opinion to sway the direction on this issue is offensive to me. Given we have no control over the supply coming from the weather patterns, this should point to the path forward on managing the resources that serve the greatest good for the lives of the people who depend on it. Yes, I love going and recreating on Powell, but this is SO much bigger than that. I beg of you to put "winning" aside and focus on what actually matters. It's the people, which all the politicians seem to have forgotten. Be different, focus on what is right for a change. Post-2026 Colorado River

# *Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

## Form Letter 25

In total, Bureau of Reclamation received 4 submittals of Form Letter 25. All 4 were form copies, defined as a copy of the original submittal with no additional or redacted text.

**Table 1. Counts for Form Letter 25.**

| <b>Unit</b>                 | <b>Count</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Total number of submissions | 4            |
| Form copy                   | 4            |

Form #: 25

Date Received: 12/04/2024

Organizations:

I Support Recreation on the Colorado River Basin I am writing as a supporter and user of Lake Powell and water resources across the West. Water recreation is very important to our family. I am concerned about responsible water and energy infrastructure management and the proposed alternatives for the Post-2026 Colorado River Operation Guidelines. The dams of the Colorado River Basin are essential for energy reliability, irrigation, water storage, navigation, and regional economic stability. I appreciate the Bureau of Reclamation recognizing BlueRibbon Coalition's Path to 3588' Plan as a considered alternative and for including recreation in its analysis. Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam face pressure from anti-dam advocates seeking decommissioning, which would jeopardize their vital role in the river system. I appreciate BOR's recognition that a one-dam system would reduce resilience and harm both the environment and the economy. As a recreation user, I support alternatives that prioritize recreational access within the Basin. The Supply-Driven, Max Operational Flexibility, and Enhanced Coordination alternatives tie releases to low water levels, shortages, or inflows, helping protect critical infrastructure. I support approaches that base releases on actual inflows rather than maximum deliveries that could undermine storage and recreation. Keeping as much water in the reservoirs as possible is vital. These critical infrastructure assets should not be treated as bargaining tools in speculative environmental campaigns. Lake Powell and Lake Mead are too important to risk, and their continued operation must be protected. Post-2026 Colorado River