

March 2, 2026

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Colorado River Basin
Submitted via: email –
crbpost2026@usbr.gov

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement – Post-2026 Colorado River Operations

To Whom It May Concern:

Maricopa County appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) addressing post-2026 Colorado River operations. The County recognizes the unprecedented hydrologic challenges facing the Colorado River Basin and supports the development of durable, collaborative operating guidelines that protect critical infrastructure, promote system reliability, and provide operational clarity for the next management period.

Maricopa County is the fourth most populous county in the United States and home to significant municipal, tribal, agricultural, and recreational water users. Colorado River supplies delivered through the Central Arizona Project (CAP) are foundational to the County's long-term water reliability, economic vitality, and environmental stewardship.

While the DEIS appropriately focuses on the mainstem reservoirs—Lake Mead and Lake Powell—the County respectfully requests that the Final EIS consider shared responsibility between the lower and upper basin states for future cuts. The Final EIS and subsequent Record of Decision should recognize the indirect effects that basin-wide operational decisions may have on secondary reservoirs and facilities integrated into the CAP system, including Lake Pleasant and Maricopa County's managed Lake Pleasant Regional Park.

Lake Pleasant serves dual purposes as a water storage reservoir and a major regional recreation destination. Although it is not a primary Colorado River reservoir, its operations are influenced by CAP delivery and storage decisions, which in turn are shaped by federal operating criteria. Operational predictability and rate-of-change management are particularly important for:

- Infrastructure stability and long-term capital planning
- Public safety and emergency response coordination
- Concessionaire and marina operations



- Regional recreation access and economic activity

The County does not advocate for a specific allocation outcome among basin states. Rather, we encourage Reclamation to ensure that post-2026 operational guidelines:

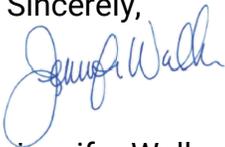
1. Promote coordinated basin-wide management approaches that reduce the likelihood of abrupt operational shifts;
2. Incorporate adaptive management mechanisms that provide advanced visibility into anticipated operational changes;
3. Continue to protect critical elevations necessary for infrastructure stability; and
4. Recognize the socioeconomic importance of recreation and secondary reservoir operations within the broader system.

Among the alternatives presented, those emphasizing coordination and protection of critical infrastructure appear most compatible with long-term planning stability. We support continued collaboration among basin states, Tribes, federal agencies, and local stakeholders to achieve a balanced and durable outcome.

Maricopa County appreciates Reclamation's engagement throughout this process and welcomes continued dialogue as the Final EIS is developed. A predictable and resilient Colorado River operating framework is essential to supporting the communities, economies, and public resources that depend upon it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Waller
Director

cc: Central Files
Blanca Caballero, Assistant County Manager
David Jordan, Deputy Director

