



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Lower Colorado Regional Office  
P.O. Box 61470  
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

IN REPLY REFER TO:

LC-4220  
WTR-4.03

**JUN 20 2012**

CERTIFIED - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Honorable Sherry Cordova  
Chairperson  
Cocopah Indian Tribe  
County 15 & Avenue G  
Somerton, AZ 85350

Subject: Notice of Calendar Year (CY) 2011 Overrun of Colorado River Entitlement by the Cocopah Indian Tribe (Tribe)

Dear Chairperson Cordova:

Effective January 1, 2004, the Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy (IOPP) established requirements for payback of any inadvertent overuse of Colorado River water by users in the Lower Division States. A copy of the IOPP is enclosed for reference (Enclosure 1). In accordance with the IOPP, this letter informs the Tribe that the Bureau of Reclamation's final water accounting records for CY 2011 document that the Tribe incurred an overrun of 605 acre-feet. An overrun governed by the IOPP occurs when an entitlement holder inadvertently diverts, pumps, or receives Colorado River water in excess of the entitlement holder's approved water order for that year.

The Tribe is entitled to divert 10,847 acre-feet of Colorado River water annually for use on the Tribe's Trust lands. The Tribe also owns Fee lands within a portion of the area described in Present Perfected Right (PPR) No. 7. The quantity of Colorado River water available for use on these Fee lands from PPR No. 7 is under discussion. Until this is resolved, Reclamation will estimate a right to divert up to 671 acre-feet of Colorado River water annually under PPR No. 7 for use on the Tribe's Fee lands.<sup>1</sup> This results in a provisional upper limit entitlement of 11,518 acre-feet annually (10,847 acre-feet + 671 acre-feet = 11,518 acre-feet).

By letter dated November 16, 2010, the Bureau of Indian Affairs approved the Tribe's request to divert up to 9,550 acre-feet of Colorado River water during CY 2011 for use on the Tribe's Trust lands. The Tribe also diverted Colorado River water for use on the Tribe's Fee lands. As published in the *Colorado River Accounting and Water Use Report Arizona, California, and Nevada Calendar Year 2011*, the Tribe diverted a total of 12,123 acre-feet in CY 2011. Based

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<sup>1</sup>The Tribe's entitlement for use on Fee lands is an estimated amount based on an acreage-prorated share of the total entitlement under PPR No.7. The amount of this entitlement is currently under review by the Tribe's attorneys and should not be construed as a final determination by Reclamation regarding the amount to which the Tribe is entitled under PPR No. 7.

upon the Tribe's approval amount of 9,550 acre-feet for diversion to Trust lands and Reclamation's estimate of 671 acre-feet for diversion to Fee lands, which results in a total authorized diversion of 10,221 acre-feet, the Tribe exceeded its approved diversion by 1,902 acre-feet (12,123 acre-feet – 10,221 acre-feet = 1,902 acre-feet).

In accordance with Section 3.2 of the *Lower Colorado Region Policy for Apportioned but Unused Water*, enclosed for reference (Enclosure 2), the Tribe's overrun amount has been offset by 1,297 acre-feet, or the amount equivalent to the difference between the Tribe's CY 2011 approved diversion (10,221 acre-feet) and the Tribe's upper limit of its combined entitlements (11,518 acre-feet). Therefore, the Tribe's CY 2011 overrun amount for which payback is required is 605 acre-feet.<sup>2</sup>

An entitlement holder incurring an inadvertent overrun is required to submit a payback plan to Reclamation that demonstrates how the entitlement holder will intentionally forbear use of Colorado River water by implementing extraordinary conservation measures sufficient to meet its payback obligation. Examples of extraordinary conservation measures that might be used to meet a payback obligation include, but are not limited to: delivery system improvements, land fallowing, seepage recovery, on-farm conservation (e.g. scientific irrigation scheduling, salinity management, and soil moisture monitoring), forgone banking of Colorado River water off-stream, and exchange of Colorado River water for water banked off-stream. For overruns incurred in CY 2011, an entitlement holder must submit a payback plan to Reclamation by July 23, 2012. An entitlement holder's payback plan must describe:

- a. The cause of the overrun.
- b. The extraordinary conservation measure(s) that will be implemented to pay back the overrun.
- c. The schedule, location, and amount of water that will be conserved by the payback measure(s), and information that adequately demonstrates that the proposed payback measure(s) is: (1) in addition to measures being implemented to conserve water in accordance with any existing water transfer agreements, water conservation agreements, or Intentionally Created Surplus Plans of Creation, and (2) in addition to the measures implemented in any Reclamation-approved water conservation plan.
- d. How the payback measure(s) being implemented will meet the payback obligation.
- e. The amount of Colorado River water that will be conserved and/or supplemented by the payback measure(s) being implemented, for each year in the case of 3-year payback plans.
- f. The method(s) by which Reclamation will be able to monitor the implementation of the payback plan and verify the amount of payback.

In accordance with Section 2.3 of the IOPP, payback of the Tribe's CY 2011 overrun will begin in CY 2013. The number of years within which an overrun must be paid back, and the minimum

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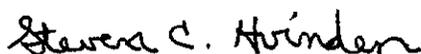
<sup>2</sup>Please note that this amount may change when the issue under review relating to the quantity of Colorado River water available to the Tribe's Fee lands is resolved.

payback required for each year are defined in Section 2.6 of the IOPP. The Tribe's payback for the CY 2011 overrun is governed by Section 2.6.c. of the IOPP, which provides for a 3-year payback schedule. The minimum required payback amount each year under Section 2.6.c. is "the greater of 20 percent of the individual entitlement holder's maximum allowable cumulative overrun account amount or 33.3 percent of the total account balance." The IOPP limits an entitlement holder's cumulative overrun account amount to a maximum of 10 percent of the entitlement holder's annual entitlement. Based on the Tribe's annual entitlement of 11,518 acre-feet, the Tribe's cumulative overrun account limitation is 1,152 acre-feet ( $11,518 \text{ acre-feet} \times 0.10 = 1,152 \text{ acre-feet}$ ).

Because 20 percent of the Tribe's maximum allowable cumulative overrun account amount ( $1,152 \text{ acre-feet} \times 0.20 = 230 \text{ acre-feet}$ ) is greater than 33.3 percent of the Tribe's total account balance ( $605 \text{ acre-feet} \times 0.33 = 201 \text{ acre-feet}$ ), the Tribe is required to pay back 230 acre-feet in CY 2013, the first year of payback. The remaining overrun balance of 375 acre-feet is required to be paid back in the subsequent 2 years as follows: 230 acre-feet in CY 2014, and 145 acre-feet in CY 2015.

Should the Tribe need assistance in developing its payback plan, or have questions regarding the IOPP or the Tribe's overrun and payback obligation, please contact Mr. Paul J. Matuska, Water Accounting and Verification Group Manager, at 702-293-8164.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Hvinden  
Chief, Boulder Canyon Operations Office

Enclosures – 2

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cc: Continued on next page.

cc: Continued from previous page.

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**INADVERTENT OVERRUN  
AND  
PAYBACK POLICY**

The following pages are a discussion of the Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy as contained in pages 16 through 19 of The Record of Decision for the Colorado River Water Delivery Agreement issued on October 10, 2003.

water is created by hydropower generation and, therefore, the change in points of diversion will not impact the CRIT's senior water right. As described in the Final IA EIS, the QSA water transfers are estimated to reduce the opportunity to produce power at Headgate Rock Dam by an average of about 5 percent. The variation in Colorado River flow is within the range that occurs as a normal course of river operation.

## **IX. Implementing the Decision**

### **A. INADVERTENT OVERRUN AND PAYBACK POLICY**

Reclamation is adopting a policy that will identify inadvertent overruns, will establish procedures that account for inadvertent overruns and will define subsequent payback requirements for users of Colorado River mainstream water in the Lower Division States. The Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy is effective beginning on January 1, 2004. The language of the policy has been modified from the language published in Appendix I of the Final IA EIS. The comments from Southern Nevada Water Authority and Colorado River Commission of Nevada were accommodated. Edits were made for grammar and consistency, and to eliminate duplication. None of the changes would result in environmental impacts different from those described in the Final IA EIS. The policy as finalized follows.

#### **1. Background**

In its June 3, 1963 opinion in the case of *Arizona v. California* (373 U.S. 546), the Supreme Court of the United States held that Congress has directed the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to administer a network of useful projects constructed by the Federal Government on the lower Colorado River, and has entrusted the Secretary with sufficient power to direct, manage, and coordinate their operation. The Court held that this power must be construed to permit the Secretary to allocate and distribute the waters of the mainstream of the Colorado River within the boundaries set down by the Boulder Canyon Project Act (45 Stat. 1057, 43 U.S.C. 617) (BCPA). The Secretary has entered into contracts for the delivery of Colorado River water with entities in Arizona, California, and Nevada in accordance with section 5 of the BCPA. The Secretary has the responsibility of operating Federal facilities on the Colorado River and delivering mainstream Colorado River water to users in Arizona, California, and Nevada that hold entitlements, including present perfected rights, to such water.

Article V of the Decree of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Arizona v. California* dated March 9, 1964 (376 U.S. 340) requires the Secretary to compile and maintain records of diversions of water from the mainstream, of return flow of such water to the mainstream as is available for consumptive use in the United States or in satisfaction of the Mexican Treaty obligation, and of consumptive use of such water. Reclamation reports this data each year in the Decree Accounting Record.<sup>15</sup>

Pursuant to the Criteria for Coordinated Long-Range Operation of Colorado River Reservoirs developed as a result of the Colorado River Basin Project Act of September 30, 1968, the Secretary annually consults with representatives of the governors of the Colorado River Basin States, general public and others and issues an Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the coordinated operation of the Colorado River reservoirs. Reclamation also requires each Colorado River water user in the Lower

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<sup>15</sup> These records are published as: *Compilation of Records in Accordance with Article V of the Decree of the Supreme Court of the United States in Arizona v. California, et. al.*, dated March 9, 1964.

Basin to schedule water deliveries in advance for the following calendar year (calendar year is the annual basis for decree accounting of consumptive use in the lower Colorado basin) and to later report its actual water diversions and returns to the mainstream.

Pursuant to 43 CFR part 417, prior to the beginning of each calendar year, Reclamation consults with entities holding BCPA section 5 contracts (Contractor) for the delivery of water. Under these consultations, Reclamation makes recommendations relating to water conservation measures and operating practices in the diversion, delivery, distribution, and use of Colorado River water. Reclamation also makes a determination of the Contractor's estimated water requirements for the ensuing calendar year to ensure that deliveries of Colorado River water to each Contractor will not exceed those reasonably required for beneficial use under the respective BCPA contract or other authorization for use of Colorado River water. Reclamation sends a letter approving the Contractor's water order for the ensuing year in the amount determined to be appropriate by Reclamation. Reclamation then monitors the actual water orders, receives reports of measured diversions and return flows from major Contractors and Federal establishments, estimates unmeasured diversions and return flows, calculates consumptive use from preliminary diversions and measured and unmeasured return flows, and reports these records on an individual and aggregate monthly basis. Later, when final records are available, Reclamation prepares and publishes the final Decree Accounting Record on a calendar year basis.

For various reasons, a user may inadvertently consumptively use Colorado River water in an amount that exceeds the amount available under its entitlements as provided in annual approved water orders (inadvertent overrun). Further, the final Decree Accounting Record may show that an entitlement holder inadvertently diverted water in excess of the quantity of the entitlement that may not have been evident from the preliminary records. Reclamation is therefore adopting an administrative policy that defines inadvertent overruns, establishes procedures that account for the inadvertent overruns and defines the subsequent requirements for payback to the Colorado River mainstream.

## **2. Inadvertent Overruns**

Effective January 1, 2004, Reclamation adopts the following Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy for the Lower Colorado River Basin:

1. Inadvertent overruns are those which the Secretary deems to be beyond the control of the entitlement holder; for example, overruns due to the discrepancy between preliminary and final stream flow and diversion records.
2. An inadvertent overrun is Colorado River water diverted, pumped or received by an entitlement holder of the Lower Division States that is in excess of the water user's entitlement for that year. This IOP policy provides a structure to payback the amount of water diverted, pumped or received in excess of entitlement for that year. This IOP policy does not create any right or entitlement to this water, nor does it expand the underlying entitlement in any way. An entitlement holder has no right to order, divert, pump or receive an inadvertent overrun. If, however, water is diverted, pumped or received inadvertently in excess of annual approved orders, and sources of unused Colorado River water are not available to accommodate adjustment of water orders by Reclamation, the inadvertent overrun policy will govern the payback. This IOP Policy will not be applied in any manner to the deliveries made under the United States Mexico Water Treaty of 1944.
3. Payback will be required to commence in the calendar year that immediately follows the release date of a final Decree Accounting Record that reports uses that are in excess of an individual's

entitlement.

4. Payback must be made only from measures that are above and beyond the normal reasonable and beneficial consumptive use of water (extraordinary conservation measures). Extraordinary conservation measures mean actions taken to conserve water that otherwise would not return to the mainstream of the Colorado River and be available for beneficial consumptive use in the United States or to satisfy the Mexican treaty obligation. Any entitlement holder with a payback obligation must submit to Reclamation, along with its water order, a plan which will show how it will intentionally forbear use of Colorado River water by extraordinary conservation measures, including fallowing, sufficient to meet its payback obligation and which demonstrates that the measures being proposed are in addition to those being implemented to meet any existing transfer or conservation agreement, and are in addition to the measures found in its Reclamation approved conservation plan. Plans for payback could also include supplementing Colorado River system water supplies with non-system water supplies through exchange or forbearance or other acceptable arrangements, provided that non-system water is not physically introduced into the system without appropriate environmental review and approval by Reclamation. Water banked off-stream or groundwater from areas not hydrologically connected to the Colorado River or its tributaries are examples of such supplemental supplies. Water ordered but subsequently not diverted is not included in this policy in any manner.
5. Maximum cumulative inadvertent overrun accounts will be specified for individual entitlement holders as 10 percent of an entitlement holder's normal year consumptive use entitlement. (Normal year means a year for which the Secretary has determined that sufficient mainstream Colorado River water is available for release to satisfy 7.5 maf of annual consumptive use in the States of California, Arizona and Nevada.)
6. The number of years within which an overrun, calculated from consumptive uses reported in final Decree Accounting Records, must be paid back, and the minimum payback required for each year shall be as follows:
  - a. In a year in which the Secretary makes a flood control release or a space building release pursuant to the applicable Water Control Manual for Hoover Dam, Lake Mead, any accumulated amount in the overrun account will be forgiven.
  - b. If the Secretary has declared a 70R surplus in an AOP applicable to the calendar year of payback, any payback obligation for that calendar year will be deferred at the entitlement holder's option.
  - c. In a year when Lake Mead elevation is between the elevation for a 70R surplus determination and elevation 1,125 feet above mean sea level on January 1, the payback obligation incurred in that year must be paid back in full within 3 years of the reporting of the obligation, with a minimum payback each year being the greater of 20 percent of the individual entitlement holder's maximum allowable cumulative overrun account amount or 33.3 percent of the total account balance.
  - d. In a year when Lake Mead elevation is at or below elevation 1,125 feet above mean sea level on January 1, the total account balance must be paid back in full in that calendar year.
  - e. For any year in which the Secretary declares a shortage under the Decree, the total

account must be paid back in full that calendar year, and further accumulation of inadvertent overruns will be suspended as long as shortage conditions prevail.

7. A separate inadvertent overrun account may be established in those limited cases in which a lower priority user is contractually responsible for payback of other senior entitlement holders. The separate inadvertent overrun account will be limited to a maximum cumulative amount of 10 percent of the senior entitlement holder's average consumptive use. Such inadvertent overrun accounts will be the assigned responsibility of the lower priority user in addition to its own entitlement-based inadvertent overrun account. If, however, senior entitlement holder's approved aggregate calendar year water orders are in excess of the specified amount for which the lower priority user will be responsible, such excess will not be deemed inadvertent and the lower priority user's water order for that year will be reduced accordingly by Reclamation.
8. Each month, Reclamation will monitor the actual water orders, receive reports of measured diversions and return flows from Contractors and Federal establishments, estimate unmeasured diversions and return flows, and project individual and aggregate consumptive uses for the year. Should preliminary determinations indicate that monthly consumptive uses by individual users, or aggregate uses, when added to the approved schedule of uses for the remainder of that year, exceed entitlements pursuant to annual approved water orders but are not exceeding the maximum inadvertent overrun account amount, Reclamation will notify in writing the appropriate entities that the preliminary determinations are forecasting annual uses in excess of their entitlements.
9. During years in which an entitlement holder is forbearing use to meet its payback obligation, Reclamation will monitor the implementation of the extraordinary conservation measures, and require that the entitlement holder's consumptive use be at or below its approved water order for that year. Should the entitlement holder's actual monthly deliveries for the first 5 months of the year exceed their forecasted orders, and projections indicate the entitlement holder's end of year use is likely to be 5 percent or more above their adjusted entitlement, Reclamation will notify the entitlement holder in writing. At the end of 7 months, if it continues to appear that the entitlement holder is likely to be above its adjusted entitlement Reclamation will notify the entitlement holder that they are at risk of exceeding their adjusted entitlement, and having their next year's orders placed under enforcement proceedings. Reclamation will monitor the implementation of the extraordinary conservation measures and monitor the forbearance of consumptive use of Colorado River water. Should preliminary determinations of the implementation of extraordinary conservation or of monthly Colorado River consumptive uses indicate that sufficient extraordinary conservation or sufficient forbearance of Colorado River consumptive use is not projected to occur, Reclamation will notify the appropriate entitlement holders in writing that the preliminary determinations are forecasting that their annual payback obligations are not on target or being met. If this condition occurs for two consecutive years, in the second year Reclamation will begin enforcement proceedings, and will so advise the entitlement holder in writing by July 31 of the second year. Reclamation will consult with the entitlement holder on a modified release schedule and will limit releases to the entitlement holder for the remainder of the year such that by the end of the year the individual entitlement holder has met its payback obligation.
10. Procedures will be established for accounting for inadvertent overruns on an annual basis and for supplementing the final Decree Accounting Record. The procedures and measures for administering the IOP will be reviewed every 5 years. Final determinations under this IOP policy shall be made by Reclamation's Lower Colorado Regional Director.



**Lower Colorado Region Policy for Apportioned but Unused Water<sup>1</sup>****1. Prior to the operating year:**

- 1.1. During the preparation of the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the operating year, the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) will determine the existence of any apportioned but unused water before determining the existence of a Surplus Condition and, under Article II(B)(6) of the Consolidated Decree,<sup>2</sup> allocate any such water for use within another Lower Division State by applying the priorities in Section 1 of the Interim Guidelines.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.2. During the preparation of the AOP, the Secretary may, but is not required to, reallocate apportioned but unused water under Article II(B)(6) when determining a Normal Condition or Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) Surplus Condition.
  - 1.2.1. In making the determination that unused water is available and will be reallocated, the Secretary will consider all relevant factors including but not limited to, the current storage conditions in Lake Mead and Lake Powell, the projected depletions in the Upper Basin, the Lower Basin, and Mexico for the operating year, the projected inflows into the Upper Basin and Lower Basin for the operating year, the water supplies available to the entitlement holders, and the likelihood of future determinations of a Shortage Condition.<sup>4</sup> In making these projections, the Bureau of Reclamation will utilize the technical information used in the development of the AOP and for making subsequent monthly operational updates.
  - 1.2.2. To the extent the Secretary reallocates apportioned but unused water under Article II(B)(6), the Secretary may, but is not required to, follow the priorities set forth in Section 1 of the Interim Guidelines (i.e., the priorities applicable to any reallocation of apportioned but unused water prior to the determination of a Surplus Condition).
- 1.3. During the preparation of the AOP, the Secretary will reallocate apportioned but unused water under II(B)6 when determining a Shortage Condition only under extraordinary circumstances and in consultation with the Basin States.

**2. During the operating year:**

- 2.1. If apportioned but unused water becomes available, the Secretary may, but is not required to, reallocate such water under Article II(B)(6).
- 2.2. In making the determination that unused water is available and will be reallocated, the Secretary will consider all relevant factors including, but not limited to, the current storage conditions in Lake Mead and Lake Powell, the projected depletions in the Upper Basin, the Lower Basin, and Mexico for the operating year, the projected inflows into the Upper Basin and Lower Basin for the operating year, the water supplies available to the entitlement holders, and the likelihood of future determinations of a Shortage Condition.<sup>4</sup> In making these projections, Reclamation will utilize the technical information used in the development of the AOP and for making subsequent monthly operational updates.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy does not apply to the administration of Intentionally Created Unused Apportionment pursuant to 43 CFR Part 414.

<sup>2</sup> Arizona v. California, 547 U.S. 150 (2006).

<sup>3</sup> Record of Decision, Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and the Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead, December 13, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> A determination by the Secretary that insufficient mainstream water is available for release to satisfy annual consumptive use of 7,500,000 acre-feet in Arizona, California, and Nevada under Article II(B)3 of the Consolidated Decree.

2.3. To the extent the Secretary reallocates apportioned but unused water under Article II(B)(6), the Secretary may, but is not required to, follow the priorities set forth in Section I of the Interim Guidelines (i.e., the priorities applicable to any reallocation of apportioned but unused water prior to the determination of a Surplus Condition).

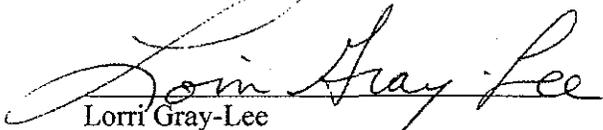
**3. After completion of the operating year:**

- 3.1. The Secretary will not reallocate apportioned but unused water under the authority of Article II(B)(6) that is discovered after December 31 of the operating year.
- 3.2. Before the publication of the Water Accounting Report<sup>5</sup> for the operating year:
- 3.2.1. Any apportioned but unused water discovered will be used to offset overrun obligations incurred in that operating year within the state found to have had unused water.
- 3.2.1.1. If an entitlement holder in the under-consuming State incurred an overrun obligation in the operating year by consuming water within the upper limit of its entitlement and that water was put to a reasonable and beneficial use, Reclamation will apply the unused water as an offset to the overrun in accordance with the Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy (IOPP) on an acre-foot for acre-foot basis.
- 3.2.1.2. If there is more than one such entitlement holder within the under-consuming State, Reclamation will reduce the payback obligations in accordance with the IOPP procedures to be adopted in consultation with the Lower Division States.
- 3.2.1.3. If the quantity of the apportioned but unused water in the operating year exceeds the overruns incurred in the operating year by such entitlement holders within the under-consuming State, Reclamation will consult with the Lower Division States to determine the appropriate course of action.
- 3.3. After the publication of the Accounting Report for the operating year:
- 3.3.1. As is standard operating procedure, Reclamation will correct Accounting Reports when errors are discovered.
- 3.3.2. If, after correcting an Accounting Report, water apportioned to a State was not used within that State, Reclamation will not apply the apportioned but unused water as an offset to any IOPP payback obligation incurred in that operating year or otherwise make that water available (i.e., the water stays in the system).

**4. Term of the policy**

- 4.1. This policy is in effect immediately and will remain in effect until rescinded by the Regional Director, in consultation with the Lower Division States.

**Adopted as a policy of the Lower Colorado Region, Bureau of Reclamation:**

  
Lorri Gray-Lee  
Regional Director

FEB 11 2010

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Date

<sup>5</sup> Colorado River Accounting and Water Use Report, Arizona, California, and Nevada. This report, among other things, contains appropriate information in satisfaction of Article V of the Consolidated Decree.