



UPPER COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION

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April 20, 2005

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Main Interior Building
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Lake Powell Water Releases

Dear Secretary Norton:

I have been directed to transmit the attached "Findings of Fact and Resolution" on behalf of the Upper Colorado River Commission, representing the Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. This resolution has been developed pursuant to Article VIII of the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact directing the Commission to perform certain functions in the administration of the Colorado River above Lee Ferry, Arizona and has been signed by all four State Commissioners and the Federal Chairman. This information is provided for your consideration as you undertake the review of the 2005 Annual Operating Plan to determine if releases from Lake Powell should be adjusted for the remainder of water year 2005.

The Commission is available to discuss the particulars of this "Resolution and Findings" if you have questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Don A. Ostler, P.E.
Executive Secretary/Director
Upper Colorado River Commission

DO/tg

cc: Herb Guenther, Director, Arizona Department of Water Resources
Jerry Zimmerman, Executive Director, Colorado River Board of California
Patricia Mulroy, General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority
George M. Caan, Executive Director, Colorado River Commission of Nevada
Rick Gold, Regional Director, Upper Colorado Region, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Bob Johnson, Regional Director, Lower Colorado Region, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

FINDINGS OF FACT AND
RESOLUTION
of the
UPPER COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION
April 18, 2005

WHEREAS, the Upper Colorado River Commission was created by the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact between the States of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming on October 11, 1948, consented to by Congress by the Act of April 6, 1949 (63 Stat. 31, Chapter 48); and

WHEREAS, the Commission is authorized and directed by Article VIII of the Compact to perform certain functions in the administration of the Colorado River Basin above Lee Ferry, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, by agreement of the seven Colorado River Basin States, the 2005 Annual Operating Plan provides for a mid-year review in April; and

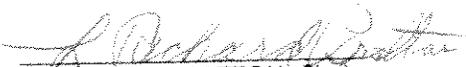
WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Interior is charged by law with the actual operation of Glen Canyon Dam and the storage and release of water therefrom, subject to the Colorado River Compact and other applicable law; and

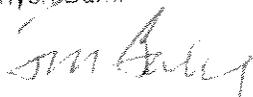
WHEREAS, the Commission finds that basin conditions support the following Findings of Fact and Recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior concerning the operation of Glen Canyon Dam in 2005:

1. The last five years commencing in October of 1999 have constituted the most severe drought in the recorded history of the Colorado River Basin, resulting in unprecedented low levels of storage in Upper Basin reservoirs, especially Lake Powell.
2. As of April 14, 2005, the active storage in Lake Powell stands at 8.03 million acre-feet (maf), or 33% of live storage capacity. This quantity is substantially below that level deemed 602(a) storage, pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 618(a)(3), which has been established by the Secretary at 14.85 maf.
3. As of April 15, 2005, the snow pack and resulting projected runoff in the Upper Basin is only slightly above normal. Projected runoff in the northern Upper Basin tributaries is below average, ranging from 80 to 86 percent of normal snow pack and forecasted runoff. Upper Basin soil moisture, ground water and reservoirs all must recover from the preceding five drought years. Thus, there is still a possibility that runoff in the Upper Basin will be below normal.
4. The Colorado River Basin below Lee Ferry has experienced unprecedented precipitation, resulting in an abundance of water being available to the Colorado River mainstem and its tributaries below Lee Ferry. As a result, most Lower Basin tributary storage reservoirs are full. Storage in Lake Mead has increased, and as of April 14, 2005 stands at 16.1 maf, or 62% of live storage capacity.
5. The flow of the Colorado River at Lee Ferry during the immediate past 10 years (1995-2004) has been 102.5 maf.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Upper Colorado River Commission that, considering the current conditions outlined above, the Commission recommends that prudent water management would require holding as much water as reasonably possible in Upper Basin reservoirs during water year 2005.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Upper Colorado River Commission that this Resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior for consideration in the operation of the Colorado River Reservoirs, and specifically operations at Glen Canyon Dam.


L. RICHARD BRATTON, Chairman
United States of America


SCOTT M. BALCOMB
State of Colorado


PHILIP B. MUTZ
State of New Mexico


D. LARRY ANDERSON
State of Utah


PATRICK T. TYRRELL
State of Wyoming