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December 6, 2004

Regional Director
Attention Jayne Harkins, BCOO-4600
Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado Region
PO Box 61470
Boulder City NV 89006-1470
FAX 702.293.8614

Dear Jayne Harkins:

I wish to comment on the coordinated long-range operation of Colorado River reservoirs.

Recently, I attended an informational meeting held in Page. One of the speakers was the manager of operations for Glen Canyon Dam. He went through a slide show which detailed the Bureau's strategy regarding operation of Colorado River reservoirs. That strategy was basically to hold the water upstream as much as possible, both to lessen evaporation, and for flexibility of operations. The flexibility premise was that if water is held upstream, it can readily be moved downstream, but once down, it can't be moved back.

My comment is that the manner in which water levels in lakes Mead and Powell are managed through operations at Glen Canyon Dam is inconsistent with your policy. Lake Powell is much lower than Lake Mead on a percentage of capacity basis. This increases evaporation, and reduces operational flexibility.

With Glen Canyon Dam being the lone exception to the normal policy, Lake Powell suffers the most of any lake on the system. Water is held high, keeping it from Powell, but releases are maintained as if there is no drought.

I believe that the operating criteria of Glen Canyon Dam need to be revisited. I believe that when all needs are considered, that it would be better to treat Mead and Powell more similarly, or better yet, to apply your normal system operating criteria to the operation of Glen Canyon Dam.

Sincerely,

Brynn C. Johns