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**Date:** 8/4/05 8:11AM  
**Subject:** Operation of Glen Canyon Dam

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Dear Regional Directors:

The Bureau of Reclamation is accepting public comments on the reoperation of the nation's two largest reservoirs, Lake Powell and Lake Mead. I urge you to examine the viability of permanently ceasing operations at Lake Powell and employing just one reservoir to capture and manage the bulk of Colorado River flows.

Please accept these comments.

\* There is no longer a need for a single-use dam at Glen Canyon

It was not until the fall of 2004, more than 40 years after Glen Canyon Dam began impounding Lake Powell that Lake Powell water storage actually augmented water storage downstream. But with climate change already causing long-term flow reductions, and water consumption levels near the river's historic average flow and rising, it's unlikely that Lake Powell will fill again. The surplus water that filled it during 17 years the first time is no longer there to build a storage cushion. Even should surplus water accumulate, Lake Mead on its own could accommodate it.

\* It's time for more efficient storage

With Lake Powell and Lake Mead losing to evaporation upwards of 17 percent of the water that flows into them, it's time that more efficient means be explored for storing this precious water. Vacant space in underground aquifers on, or accessible to, existing Colorado River infrastructure could accommodate more water than these two reservoirs combined-and with far greater efficiency. Upwards of 810,000 acre-feet of water annually-enough water for 1.6 million households of four people each-could be saved by eliminating Lake Powell and operating Lake Mead principally for distribution to groundwater recharge facilities.

\* Revive Grand Canyon

Between Lake Powell and Lake Mead lies one of the world's most famous and geologically and ecologically unique river canyons, Grand Canyon National Park. The operation of both these reservoirs has impacted the Canyon, but Glen Canyon Dam has been far more devastating. Since its completion four of eight native fish have gone extinct and the dam has trapped the sediment necessary to maintain habitat and beaches for wildlife and recreation, as well as the stabilization of archeological sites.

\* Manage the sediment

Sediment is a major unresolved problem threatening the long-term operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Ultimately, sediment will have to be removed from one or both of these reservoirs. Removing sediment from Lake Mead rather than Lake Powell is the most feasible and least expensive likely alternative. While original estimates projected that sediment would not effect the safe operations of Glen Canyon Dam for another 60 years, scientists now warn that major problems could occur sooner.

\* Revise the Colorado River Compact

The Colorado River Compact of 1922, which largely governs the discharge of flows from Lake Powell to Lake Mead, cannot meet its intended purpose of sharing Colorado River water equitably between the Upper and Lower Basin states. The Compact allocated 11 percent more water than the river has to give, and affords the Lower Basin 20 percent more water than the upper basin. With river flows expected to decline 18 percent by 2040, this inequity will worsen as the Upper Basin is required to deliver to the Lower Basin its full share regardless of declines in river flow.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring these remarks to your attention.

Mindful of the enormous responsibilities which stand before you, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:  
Nancy Pelosi  
President George W. Bush

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