

COMMENT LETTER

RESPONSES

cont'd | interim criteria.


Recommendations

39

In sum, the DEIS underestimates the potential environmental impacts of interim surplus criteria. By narrowly defining the scope of the Secretary's discretion in managing the Lower Colorado, Reclamation has effectively diminished the area of potential impacts and the extent of impacts to water quality and sensitive species. Smaller geographic and ecological scope has, in turn, subjugated the significant environmental and social impact of the proposed criteria. As a result, there is no apparent need for environmental mitigation or for an environmental preferable alternative. The quality of the draft EIS suffers as these transgressions accrue; only a draft supplemental EIS can remedy these flaws.

39: A comprehensive discussion of this issue is in the end of the next section. Reclamation does not believe that a Supplemental DEIS is required. We have expanded the area of potential effect and revised analyses of water quality and sensitive species impacts. A preferred alternative and environmental commitments are identified in the FEIS. The ROD will discuss the environmentally preferred alternative.

Sincerely,


Kara Gillon
Associate Counsel

William J. Snape, III
Vice-President for Law and Litigation

Attachment

COMMENT LETTER



Sep. 01 2000 11:40AM P2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICESouthwest Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

July 13, 2000

Mr. David Hogan
Center for Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 628
Santa Ysabel, California 92070

Dear Mr. Hogan:

This letter is in response to the Center for Biological Diversity request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), dated June 5, 2000, for documents relating to an informal or formal Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation which may have occurred between the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) with regard to the Department of the Interior's Colorado River Interim Surplus Criteria.

I understand that you spoke with Ms. Deanna Harwood, staff attorney in the Office of General Counsel, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on July 7, 2000. Ms. Harwood and I appreciate your acceptance of our request for additional time in responding to your request. It is our understanding from that conversation that your interest is limited to whether the Bureau of Reclamation had initiated informal or formal ESA consultation with NMFS. As the Bureau of Reclamation has not contacted NMFS regarding informal or formal ESA consultation on the Department of Interior's Colorado River Interim Surplus Criteria, we have no documents responsive to your request.

Although this does not constitute a denial of your request because there were no records available or withheld, you may appeal this determination within 30 days of receipt of this letter. Appeals shall be addressed to the Office of the General Counsel, Room 5882, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20230, and prominently mark your letter and the outside envelope, "FOIA Appeal." Your appeal should state the reasons why you believe this determination was in error. Attach a copy of your original request and a copy of this letter to your appeal.

Sincerely,

Rodney R. McInnis
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: Deanna Harwood

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