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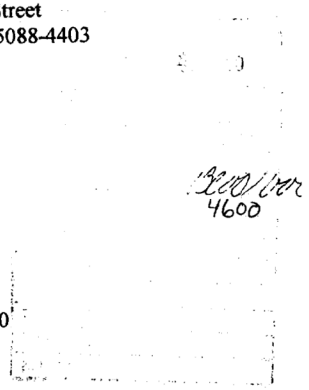

26 August 2000

Dear Reclamation,

Thank you for the review copy of the Colorado River Interim Surplus Criteria Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Please retain my name of the mailing list for this project.

After a thorough review of the DEIS it is apparent that the various alternatives are all *very* similar and that the distinction between them is simply a matter of degree. All describe a means of of meeting the purpose and need of the project and as reading Table 2-1 reveals; a comparison of them shows there are very small differences between the plans.

I would like to make a case for the **Shortage Protection Plan**, based on following criteria that might appear to have been long sacrificed on the Colorado River.

By my reading, the shortage protection plan will result in the minimum amount of water impounded by dams over the project period. I strongly recommend this alternative on the basis of "Minimum Impact". Clearly, traditional notions of "Leave No Trace" and "Minimum Impact" to the river have long been abandoned in the name of development. No one can look at Glen Canyon Dam and imagine that "Leave No Trace" has ruled the day, but as in most things improvement is made in matters of degree. The operating philosophy of the Colorado River Storage Project should be to **operate the existing system with as little impact as possible to the environment**.

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Clearly the impoundment of water behind a dam is a significant impact to the Colorado River, both up and down stream. The choice of alternatives should be the one that impounds the least water for the least time and thus allows the natural river systems to operate as normally as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Mark M Belles

1: Reclamation notes the preference for the Shortage Protection Alternative. We also wish to note that while the Shortage Protection Alternative would tend to produce the lowest reservoir levels, it shares with all alternatives the probability that the reservoirs would refill during periods of above-normal runoff.