

COMMENT LETTER

RESPONSES

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE RESOURCES AGENCY

GRAY DAVIS, Governor

COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

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TRANSMITTED VIA FACSIMILE & US MAIL

September 8, 2000

Mr. Robert W. Johnson
Regional Director
Lower Colorado Region
Attn: Jayne Harkins, LC-4600
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 61470
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

SEP 11 2000

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4600

Re: Comments on Colorado River Interim Surplus Criteria
Draft Environmental Impact Statement - July 2000

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The following comments supplement the comments submitted by the Colorado River Board in its letter dated June 29, 1999.

1 The Colorado River Board of California (CRB) wishes to recognize and appreciate the enormous amount of effort and time that has been expended to date by the Department of the Interior, especially Deputy Secretary David Hayes, and the staff of the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Lower Colorado Region office in facilitating the development of the interim surplus criteria for the Lower Colorado River among the various parties and stakeholders. As you are aware, California is committed to implementing its proposed "Colorado River Water Use Plan" dated May 11, 2000 (Plan). Interim surplus criteria for the Lower Colorado River is a vital component of the Plan. The representatives of the Governors of the seven Colorado River Basin States have submitted a "Working Draft for Interim Surplus Criteria Guidelines" for inclusion in the final environmental impact statement which Reclamation published in the August 8, 2000 issue of the *Federal Register* (volume 65, No. 153). The CRB supports the seven Basin States' Working Draft for Interim Surplus Criteria Guidelines as the preferred course of action.

It is the CRB's understanding that Reclamation has requested that representatives of the Colorado River Basin States provide Reclamation with updated projections of demand for Colorado River water for Reclamation's use in the FEIS. California is in the process of fulfilling Reclamation's request taking into account the Plan and the Working Draft for Interim Surplus Criteria Guidelines.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Zimmerman
Executive Director

1: The preferred alternative in this FEIS is derived from the Seven State Proposal. Reclamation did not structure the preferred alternative precisely as described in that draft proposal, but made some changes for consistency with the purpose and need of the proposed action, Reclamation policy and operational procedures.