

Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study

Public Input Sought for Options to Resolve Water Supply and Demand Imbalances

Since January 2010, the Bureau of Reclamation and agencies representing the seven Colorado River Basin States have been conducting a study on the Colorado River Basin. The purpose of the Study is to define future imbalances in water supply and demand in the Basin through the year 2060, and to develop and analyze options and strategies to resolve those imbalances. The Study is now entering its final phase and input is being sought on a broad range of options to resolve future water supply and demand imbalances.

The Study will not result in the selection or funding of a particular proposed option. Rather, the Study is intended to explore a broad range of options to help address future imbalances.

Spanning parts of the seven states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming, the Colorado River Basin is one of the most critical sources of water in the western United States and Mexico. It is widely known that the Colorado River, based on inflows observed over the last century, is over-allocated and supply and demand imbalances are likely to be exacerbated in the future.

Reclamation is considering the needs of Basin resources that are dependent upon a healthy river system, including water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural use; hydroelectric power generation; recreation; fish and wildlife and their habitats; water quality including salinity; flow and water-dependent ecological systems; and flood control, all under a range of conditions that could occur over the next 50 years.

How to Submit Input

To submit an option to help resolve future supply and demand imbalances in the Basin, please submit an "Option Submittal Form" available on the Study website at:

<http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/programs/crbstudy.html>.

To submit a hard copy of the form, mail to:

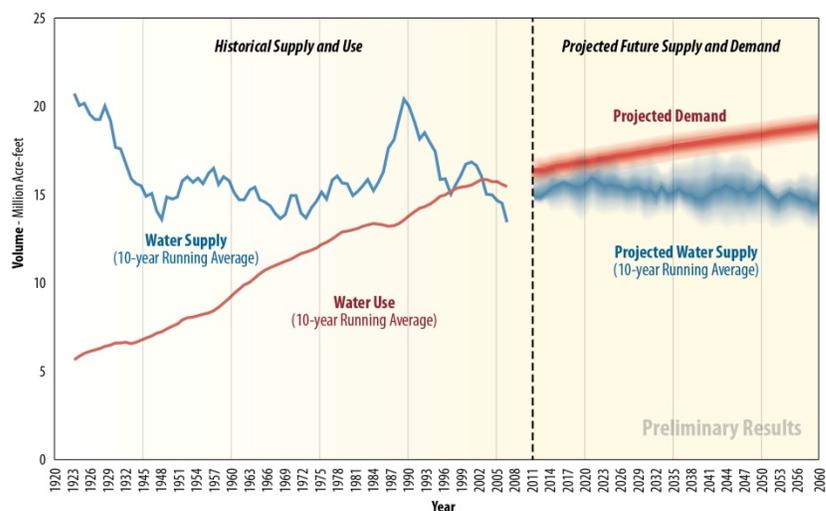
Bureau of Reclamation,
Attention Ms. Pam Adams, LC-2721, P.O. Box
61470, Boulder City, NV 89006-1470.

Please submit input by February 1, 2012.

Study Approach and Projected Range of Water Supply and Demand Imbalances

An Interim Report was released in June 2011. It was made available for public comment, and, together with other technical updates, is building the foundation to the complete Study, planned for July 2012. At this point in the Study process, additional input is being sought on a broad range of potential options to resolve imbalances in the Basin. The effectiveness of the various options at resolving those imbalances will then be explored.

Given the historical variability of Colorado River inflows and the potential for increased variability in the future, there is great uncertainty associated with future water supply throughout the Basin over the next 50 years. That uncertainty, coupled with the uncertainty in future demand for water Basin-wide, is being addressed using a scenario planning approach.



Based on preliminary assessments of the scenarios quantified to date, large supply-demand imbalances (greater than 3.5 million acre-feet) are plausible over the next 50 years, particularly when considering potential changes in climate. Work is ongoing to consider alternative combinations of supply and demand that will likely result in imbalances both greater than and less than 3.5 million acre-feet.

Managing Water Supply and Demand in the Colorado River Basin

Water managers and water users in the Basin have long recognized the need to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of shortfalls between water supply and demands.

Recent efforts implemented by Basin stakeholders have focused on improving efficiency of operations, improving water conservation and storage, improving municipal water use efficiency, augmenting the Basin supply, implementing voluntary water transfers, conjunctively using surface water and groundwater, and extending supplies through greater reuse of water.

No single option or project will be adequate to meet all of the needs in all areas under each of the future scenarios. A combination of options addressing supply augmentation, demand management such as conservation, and system operational efficiencies will likely be needed.

Many of these efforts have resulted in solutions to past water management challenges and will continue to provide benefit to the Basin in meeting the challenges that lie ahead. Due to the scale of the Basin, the magnitude and timing of projected imbalances, and the broad needs of the Basin being considered, a wide variety of options will be explored, including additional conservation and reuse, development of local groundwater supplies, augmentation, and operational efficiencies.

Additional Study Information

The reports and analysis being prepared as components of this Study will better define options for future water management of the Basin where potential changes in climate, record drought, population increases, and environmental needs have heightened competition for scarce water supplies. Interest in the Study is broad and includes Native American tribes and communities, agricultural users, purveyors of municipal and industrial water, power users and providers, recreational groups, and conservation groups.

As described above, and due to the many diverse viewpoints and perspectives of those interested in the Study, technical updates are being published to reflect Study progress and the ongoing input of stakeholders. Interim Report No. 1 was published in June 2011 and updates to the technical reports included in Interim Report No. 1 are anticipated to be published in January 2012.

For additional information on the Study, including a report describing the preliminary assessment of potential future imbalances and the approach for organizing and evaluating options, visit us **online** at: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/programs/crbstudy.html> or contact us:

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