

Peer Review Plan

Review Framework and Standards for Design Activities Performed by Non-Reclamation Entities

Date: September 19, 2026

Originating office: Technical Service Center, Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, Colorado

Reclamation roles:

Director: Katie Bartojay, Chief Engineer/Technical Service Center, Bureau of Reclamation

Peer Review Lead: Ryan Woodruff, Geotechnical Services Division Chief, Technical Service Center, Bureau of Reclamation

Subject and Purpose:

The Review Framework and Standards for Design Activities Performed by Non-Reclamation Entities (Framework) establishes a consistent, transparent, and structured approach for reviewing design activities performed by non-Reclamation entities for Reclamation assets or for designs that affect Reclamation infrastructure. The Framework is a reference for the applicable Reclamation Manual (RM) Policies and Directives and Standards (D&S) that govern design activities performed by non-Reclamation entities and is designed to:

1. Define the structure for determining the appropriate level of review, ensuring that the depth and rigor of technical evaluation align with Reclamation's ownership responsibilities and the criticality of the asset.
2. Identify the Reclamation office(s) responsible for conducting the review, clarifying roles and ensuring accountability throughout the review process.
3. Communicate Reclamation's design requirements to non-Reclamation designers, providing clarity on required standards, criteria, and review practices.
4. Inform Reclamation staff of their roles and responsibilities when carrying out design reviews, promoting consistency and aligning expectations across disciplines.

Impact of Dissemination:

This document communicates Reclamation's design requirements to non-Reclamation designers and provides clarity on required Reclamation standards, criteria, and review practices. Based on this, the TSC Director has determined that the information in the "Framework" has clear impact on private sector decisions. As defined by Office of Management and Budget Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (70 FR 2664-2677) and Reclamation Manual Peer Review of Scientific Information and Assessments Policy (CMP P14), this document is determined to be "Influential Scientific Information".

Peer Review Scope:

The purpose of this peer review is for Reclamation to receive non-Reclamation design entities' and partner's feedback as it relates to applying this "Framework" when performing Reclamation design and construction activities.

Non-Reclamation design entity Peer Reviewers will be asked to provide responses and brief explanations to the following questions:

- Question 1. Are the Engineer of Record (EOR) roles and responsibilities adequately defined?
- Question 2. Are the required deliverables outlined in Table 2 clearly defined and reasonable?
- Question 3. Are the design requirements adequately defined in Section 4 and Appendix A?

Reclamation partner Peer Reviewers will be asked to provide responses and brief explanations to the following questions:

- Question 1. Are the Reclamation Partners/Customers roles and responsibilities adequately defined?
- Question 2. Does the document clarify the need for early planning and communication with the Reclamation's Area Office to streamline the review process?
- Question 3. Can Reclamation add anything to Framework that would further support Partner led designs?

Each reviewer will be assigned to one of the two categories (non-Reclamation design or partner). Reviewers are to provide comments solely on the scientific information being reviewed, and not on any agency decision or policy.

Timing of Review:

The review period is expected to be October 1, 2026 thru November 1, 2026. The final Peer Review Report is expected to be available on the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Peer Review public website (<http://www.usbr.gov/main/qoi/peeragenda.html>) by December 31, 2026. No time deferrals are involved.

Methodology of Review:

Reviews will be conducted by individuals. The identities and organization of the reviewers will be disclosed. Individual comments will not be attributed to the specific reviewer.

Public comments received during the public comment period will not be provided to the peer reviewers prior to the review. The peer review process will not provide opportunities for public participation.

Number of Peer Reviewers:

It is anticipated that 4-6 peer reviewers will be utilized.

Reviewer Selection Process:

The peer reviewers will be selected by Reclamation staff. The public will not be asked to nominate reviewers.

The **Non-Reclamation design entity Peer Reviewers** shall be from a private sector entity with 10 + years' experience in performing Reclamation designs. The peer reviewers' experience will include technical design in water-related large civil engineering projects. The peer reviewers'

design credentials shall include a combination of project management and professional engineering (both design and construction).

The **Reclamation Partner's Peer Reviewers** shall be from a Reclamation Partner that has used non-Reclamation design entities for designs of varying complexity. The peer reviewers' experience will include team leadership in water-related large civil engineering projects. The peer reviewers' team leader credentials shall include a combination of project management and professional engineering and design.

Delivery of findings:

The peer review team members will each provide all comments in a Microsoft Word document by the end of the review period. At a minimum, their report will include a brief description of their findings and recommendations in a comment matrix. The report will be provided digitally to the Peer Review Lead.

Response to Peer Review:

A summary of reviewer comments and corresponding agency responses will be included in a final agency response report. The agency response report will be posted on Reclamation's peer review agenda (<http://www.usbr.gov/main/qoi/peeragenda.html>).

Federal Register Notice:

This peer review is not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) because the review does not involve open meetings or committee chartering, and reviewers are being asked to provide individual reviews on the subject matter. Reclamation is not seeking consensus advice from the reviewers as a group.

Agency contact:

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