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Colorado River Basin

The Colorado River is a critical resource in the West. Seven U.S. states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, two Mexican states—Baja California and Sonora, and many Native American tribes and communities depend on it for water supply, hydropower, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other benefits.

Reclamation / Colorado River Basin / Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Near-term Colorado River Operations

COLORADO RIVER BASIN

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Near-term Colorado River Operations

The Bureau of Reclamation has released the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for Near-term Colorado River Operations. The supplement is to the December 2007 Record of Decision associated with the Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead, referred to as the 2007 Interim Guidelines.

- Near-term Colorado River Operations – Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
 - Appendix A – Overview of Colorado River Operations
 - Appendix B – Hydrologic Modeling of Submitted Proposals
 - Appendix C – CRMMS Model Documentation
 - Appendix D – Shortage Allocation Model Documentation
 - Appendix E – Table of Sensitive Species
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In-Depth

The Colorado River Mid-term Modeling System (CRMMS) model environment that includes the model, inputs, and results relied on to produce the scenarios presented at the November 29 and December 2 SEIS scoping webinars is available upon request, please contact Alan Butler at rabutler@usbr.gov.

Related Links

Nov. 29 and Dec. 2 Public Informational Webinar presentation

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for December 2007 Record of Decision Entitled Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations For Lake Powell and Lake Mead [↗](#)

December 2007 Record of Decision

Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the SEIS is to supplement the 2007 Interim Guidelines to modify guidelines for operation of Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam to address historic drought, historically low reservoirs, and low runoff conditions in the Colorado River Basin. The need for the modified operating guidelines is based on the potential that continued low runoff conditions in the Colorado River Basin could lead Lake Powell and Lake Mead to decline to critically low elevations, impacting operations through the remainder of the interim period (prior to January 1, 2027).

Alternatives

The draft SEIS considers three alternatives:

- The No Action Alternative, required by the National Environmental Policy Act, describes the continued implementation of existing agreements that control operations of Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams.
- Action Alternative 1 models operational changes to both Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam. Action Alternative 1 includes assumptions for reduced releases from Glen Canyon Dam as well as assumptions for additional Lower Colorado River Basin shortages based on the concept of priority. Action Alternative 1 models progressively larger additional shortages as Lake Mead's elevation declines and models larger additional shortages in 2025-2026 as compared with 2024. The total shortages and Drought Contingency Plan contributions in 2024, as modeled, are limited to 2.083 million-acre-feet because this is the maximum volume analyzed in the 2007 Interim Guidelines final environmental impact statement.
- Action Alternative 2 is similar to Action Alternative 1, in how it models operational changes to both Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam. Action Alternative 2 includes assumptions for reduced releases from Glen Canyon Dam as well as assumptions for additional Lower Colorado River Basin reductions that are distributed in the same percentage across all Lower Basin water users. While both the 2007 Interim Guidelines and the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan encompass shortages and contributions that reflect the priority system, the additional shortages identified in Action Alternative 2 for the remainder of the interim period would be distributed in the same percentage across all Lower Basin water users. Action Alternative 2 models progressively

larger additional shortages as Lake Mead's elevation declines and models larger Lower Basin shortages in 2025-2026 as compared with 2024. The total shortages and Drought Contingency Plan contributions in 2024, as modeled, are limited to 2.083 million-acre-feet because this is the maximum volume analyzed in the 2007 Interim Guidelines FEIS.

Public Involvement

The draft ~~SEIS~~ will be published in the Federal Register on April 14, 2023, starting the 45-day public comment period.

Paper copies are available for public review at the Lower Colorado Basin Regional Office, 500 Fir Street, Boulder City, Nevada 89005, and at the Upper Colorado Basin Regional Office, 125 South State Street, Room 8100, Salt Lake City, Utah 84138, as well as area offices within the Colorado River Basin. Those offices and their locations can be found on Reclamation's website.

Written comments on the ~~SEIS~~ should be submitted by May 30, 2023. Reclamation is particularly interested in receiving specific recommendations related to the analyses or alternatives that can be considered and potentially integrated into the ~~SEIS~~.

For information in Spanish on how to attend the public meetings or provide comments, please download the instructions here. Para obtener información en español sobre cómo asistir a las reuniones públicas o presentar observaciones, descargue las instrucciones aquí.

Comments may be submitted via the following methods:

- Email to: CRinterimops@usbr.gov
- Telephone: (602) 609-6739
- Webform
- Verbally at the virtual public meetings
- Mail to:
Reclamation
2007 Interim Guidelines ~~SEIS~~ Project Manager
Upper Colorado Basin Region
125 South State Street, Suite 8100
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

Reclamation will hold four virtual public meetings to provide information on the draft SEIS, answer questions, and take verbal comment. To attend a virtual public meeting, click the link below that corresponds to the meeting date you would like to attend and fill out the registration form. You will receive a confirmation email with the Zoom webinar connection information once you register.

- **Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 5:30 – 8 p.m.
Mountain time**

Registration Link:

https://swca.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_X-04hT1hSbut5O8MRkvPcg

Dial-in Options: (720) 928-9299 or (602) 753-0140

Webinar ID: 996 0050 5024

- **Monday, May 8, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. – noon
Mountain time**

Registration link:

https://swca.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kwekr3bDSxCObn7o8Q17IA

Dial-in Options: (720) 928-9299 or (602) 753-0140

Webinar ID: 969 2718 6484

- **Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 5:30 – 8 p.m.
Mountain time**

Registration link:

https://swca.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Fil5uaL7Tj6r

Dial-in Options: (720) 928-9299 or (602) 753-0140

Webinar ID: 945 5762 5742

- **Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at noon – 2:30 p.m.
Mountain time**

Registration Link:

https://swca.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_X_VmHK4Tc

Dial-in Options: (720) 928-9299 or (602) 753-0140

Webinar ID: 953 3249 2376

An interactive webpage with information on the project background and summaries of the draft SEIS alternatives and analyses will be posted on the project website prior to the virtual public meetings. Each virtual public meeting will begin with 30 minutes for participants to explore the background information on the webpage at their own pace. The formal meeting presentation will begin 30 minutes after the scheduled meeting start time. Reclamation will take questions and public comments following the presentation. The interactive webpage materials and the virtual public meetings will be available in Spanish.

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in any correspondence, you should be aware that your entire correspondence—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your correspondence to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Questions

For further information, contact the project team by email at CRinterimops@usbr.gov or call the project telephone line at (602) 609-6739.

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