



City of Needles, California Request for Commission Action

CITY COUNCIL BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Regular Special

Meeting Date: March 3, 2026

Title: Accept and file the Bureau of Reclamation's Post-2026 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Public Comment Letter from the City of Needles dated February 10, 2026

Background: Several reservoir and water management agreements governing the operation of Colorado River facilities are scheduled to expire at the end of 2026. The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, has proposed new guidelines and coordinated management strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead to take effect upon expiration of the current interim guidelines.

The Draft EIS, published in the Federal Register on January 16, 2026, initiated a 45-day public comment period that concluded on March 2, 2026. During the comment period, Reclamation held two virtual public meetings to provide information and receive stakeholder input. City staff and the Chairman of the Board of Public Utilities participated in one of those meetings.

City staff prepared a formal public comment letter, which was signed by NPUA Mayor Janet Jernigan on February 10, 2026, and submitted prior to the deadline. The City expressed strong support for the **Maximum Operational Flexibility Alternative**, which distributes shortages based on present and perfected water rights. The City also **recommended continuation of existing Lower Basin operational agreements** and conservation strategies, while urging the Upper Basin states to adopt similar measures. The letter further highlighted Needles' longstanding participation in basin agreements and its commitment to water conservation.

Fiscal Impact: No fiscal impact.

Environmental Impact: This action is not a project under CEQA.

Recommended Action: Accept and file the Bureau of Reclamation's Post-2026 Draft EIS Public Comment Letter from the City of Needles dated February 10, 2026.

Submitted By: Terry Campbell, Chairman
Rainie Torrance, Utility Manager

City Manager Approval: Patrick J. Martinez

Date: _____

Other Department Approval (when required): _____

Date: _____