



## City of Needles, California Request for Commission Action

CITY COUNCIL    BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES    Regular    Special

**Meeting Date:** January 20, 2026

**Title:** City of Needles Present Perfected Rights (“PPR”)

**Background:** Since 1885, the City has had Present Perfected Rights (“PPR”) under Contract No. 05-XX-30-W0445; to 1,500 acre-feet (“AF”) of diversion from the Colorado River (“River”), which provides 950 AF of consumptive use under PPR #43. The Contract is listed in the Consolidated Degree of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of *Arizona v. California et al.*

The highest priority rights to River water are “perfected rights” that are based on historical use of river water prior to the construction of the large Federal projects to dam and divert the river water. It is sometimes stated as “First in use, first in right.” The use must be for beneficial purposes.

In 1995, the City purchased additional PPR from the Santa Fe Railway Company for 1,250 AF of diversion and 273 AF of consumption, PPR #44. Added together, these PPR allow the City to divert up to 2,760 AF of water (1,500 AF allowed the City via its 1885 PPR diversion and 1,260 AF via the City’s acquisition of Santa Fe Railway Company’s 1896 PPR diversion) and consume 1,223 AF.

The City of Needles is also allocated 527 acre-feet per year through management of the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project.

The City completed a Phase 1 SCIA pilot project for turf removal at the River’s Edge Golf Course on April 15, 2016, which reduces the annual diversion by 232 acre-feet for ten years, expiring in 2026. In total, the City of Needles is allocated to divert 2,261 AF annually.

### **Future:**

A number of reservoir and water management decisional documents and agreements that govern the operation of Colorado River facilities and the management of Colorado River water are currently scheduled to expire at the end of 2026. The Secretary, acting through Reclamation, proposes the adoption of new guidelines and coordinated management strategies to address Lake Powell and Lake Mead through their full operating range, to be implemented upon the expiration of the existing guidelines and agreements.

The Draft EIS analyzes a broad range of reasonable alternatives for the operational elements identified in the proposed federal action. These alternatives were developed through extensive engagement with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, as well as the general public, over a timeframe of over three years.



## City of Needles, California Request for Commission Action

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Despite this extensive engagement, this Draft EIS does **not identify a Preferred Alternative** due to the current absence of a consensus-based approach to post-2026 reservoir operations among Basin entities.

Reclamation anticipates identifying a Preferred Alternative after publication of this Draft EIS that incorporates elements or variations of the Draft EIS alternatives, which would then be fully analyzed in the Final EIS.

Enclosed is the Bureau of Reclamation Draft Environmental Impact Statement evaluating a range of operational alternatives for managing Colorado River reservoirs after 2026, when current interim guidelines expire.

The Draft EIS will be published in the Federal Register on January 16, 2026, initiating a 45-day comment period that will end on March 2, 2026. Comments may be submitted via the following methods:

Reclamation will hold two virtual public meetings to provide information on the Draft EIS:

- Virtual meeting — Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Mountain time
- Virtual meeting — Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Mountain time

To register for a virtual public meeting, please go to [CR Post-2026 Operations | Bureau of Reclamation](#)

**Fiscal Impact:** To be determined

**Environmental Impact:** To be determined

**Recommended Action:** Discussion Item

**Submitted By:**

City Manager Approval: Patrick J. Martinez

Date: 1/14/2026

Other Department Approval (when required): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_