



1

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Status

April 14, 2023 - SEIS published in the Federal Register starting the 45-day comment period

May 30, 2023 - Comments on the draft SEIS were due

May 22, 2023 – Seven basin states agreed to, and Lower Basin States submitted, a Lower Basin proposal

May 22, 2023 - Department of the Interior announced temporary withdrawal of the draft SEIS to fully analyze the effects of the proposal under the National Environmental Policy Act (May 26 Federal Register Notice)

The original May 30, 2023 deadline for the submission of comments on the draft SEIS is no longer in effect.

Reclamation plans to publish an updated draft SEIS for public comment with the consensus-based proposal as an action alternative.

SEIS process will be finalized later this year.

2

Seven Basin States Letter

- Seven Basin States support the submission of the proposal by the Lower Division States
- Recognizes that having one good winter does not solve the systemic challenges facing the Colorado River
- Encourages Reclamation to advance the process for the development of new operating guidelines replacing the 2007 Interim Guidelines
- Requests Reclamation to publish the Notice of Intent for the Environmental Impact Statement related to the post-2026 Guidelines no later than June 30, 2023.



Lower Basin States Proposal Overview

- Consider changed conditions
- Implement 3 MAF of conservation through 2026, 1.5 MAF by 2024, not attributed by State
- Up to 2.5 MAF of conservation will be federally compensated
- Additional triggers to protect Mead and Powell elevations through Reclamation actions



The Colorado River Basin States Representatives of Arizona, California, and Nevada

May 22, 2023

Sent via Electronic Mail

Camille Calimlim Toulon, Commissioner
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Commissioner Toulon:

The Colorado River Basin States Representatives of Arizona, California, and Nevada (Lower Division States) have reached an agreement to conserve at least an additional 3 million acre-feet (MAF) of Colorado River Water in the Lower Basin by the end of calendar year 2026, with at least 1.5 MAF of that total being conserved by the end of calendar year 2024 (Lower Basin Plan). We request the Lower Basin Plan be fully analyzed as an action alternative in the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Near-Term Colorado River Operations Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS), published last month.

Throughout this process, and as affirmed at the time the Draft SEIS was announced last month, the Lower Division States Representatives remained committed to working together and with Reclamation to develop agreement(s) that meet the purpose and need of the Draft SEIS to "modify guidelines for operation of Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams to address historic drought, historically low reservoirs, and low-runoff conditions in the Basin" (Draft SEIS, Section 1.3). We believe this proposed action alternative both meets the purpose and need of the Draft SEIS and, when analyzed, will be shown to perform equally or better than the action alternatives originally proposed by Reclamation. The Lower Basin Plan does not require any unilateral exercise of federal authority to achieve these levels of conservation.



Lower Basin States Proposal

	2023	2024	2025	2026	4-year total
Additional Conservation					
California (KAF)	400	430	430	350	1.6 MAF
Arizona (KAF)	375	375	375	20	1.15 MAF
Nevada (KAF)	75	75	75	65	285 KAF
Total Additional Conservation	840	880	870	430	3.0 MAF

KAF - thousand acre-feet, MAF - million acre-feet

None of the 3MAF will be created by mandatory reduction

Conservation in addition to existing 2007 Interim Guidelines, the Lower Basin DCP and Minute 323



Lower Basin States Proposal

- Conservation volumes will be in the form of system conservation or Intentionally Created Surplus
- Due to limitations in ICS storage space, some DCP ICS will become system water, which is considered an uncompensated addition of system water
- Any ICS created toward the system conservation volumes cannot be delivered, transferred or assigned before December 31, 2026



Lower Basin States Proposal - Triggers

- If the April 24 MS Minimum Probable in 2024, 2025, and 2026 project Mead elevation below 1,025 feet, the Lower Division States will have 45 calendar days to propose an implementable plan to Reclamation to protect Lake Mead from going below 1,000 feet
- If such an acceptable plan is not developed, Reclamation may take independent actions to protect 1,000 feet
- If any 24 MS Minimum Probable projections project Lake Powell dropping below 3,500' in any of the upcoming 12 months, Reclamation through a mid-year adjustment could reduce Powell release to no less than 6.0 MAF, after other actions have been taken.

7 | Colorado River Discussions



7

SEIS Comment Deadline (May 30) - Withdrawn

- Seven Basin states agree on consensus system conservation proposal to protect the Colorado River Basin
- On May 22, 2023, the Department of the Interior announced that it is temporarily withdrawing the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement published last month so that it can fully analyze the effects of the proposal under the National Environmental Policy Act.
- Reclamation will then publish an updated draft SEIS for public comment with the consensus-based proposal as an action alternative. Accordingly, the original May 30, 2023, deadline for the submission of comments on the draft SEIS is no longer in effect.
- The Department plans to finalize the SEIS process later this year.

8 | Colorado River Discussions



8

Reclamation – “Bucket 2” Funding Announcement

- On Friday, May 19 Reclamation issued the Funding Opportunity for Voluntary Participation in the LC Conservation and Efficiency Program.
 - “Bucket 2” funding pool under the Inflation Reduction Act.
- Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:
 - Canal lining and conveyance system rehabilitation
 - Agricultural upgrades, whether in technology or management
 - Urban water efficiency projects
 - Non-functional turf replacement
 - Water storage projects that allow for operational flexibilities
- Proposals must be submitted electronically to Reclamation by July 19, 2023.