



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

Mr. Gene Shawcroft
Governor's Representative
State of Utah
1426 E. 750 N. Suite 400
Orem, UT 84097

MAY 03 2022

Dear Mr. Shawcroft:

The Colorado River Basin is experiencing unprecedented conditions of drought and low runoff. The best available science indicates that the effects of climate change will continue to adversely impact the basin. Combined water storage at our primary Colorado River reservoirs – Lake Powell and Lake Mead – is at the lowest level since Hoover Dam and Glen Canyon Dam were constructed. Colorado River inflow into Lake Powell last year was the second-lowest since Lake Powell began filling nearly sixty years ago. Current National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration projections indicate that basin runoff will again be well below average this year.

In recent weeks, Department of the Interior staff have shared the best available information regarding hydrologic conditions and the potential for adverse effects on Glen Canyon Dam facilities and operations with representatives of the seven Colorado River Basin States, Basin Tribal leaders, Congressional staff, officials from the Republic of Mexico, water users, water districts, federal and state agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We have identified a number of concerns, including concerns for public health and safety, that could occur within this calendar year if Lake Powell were to decline below critical elevations. These include water supply interruptions to water users that rely on Lake Powell for drinking water supplies, hydropower interruptions to users that rely on Glen Canyon Dam for power supplies, and increased uncertainty regarding downstream releases should Lake Powell elevations continue to decline. Reclamation staff have initiated efforts to assess operational and infrastructure risks and accelerate maintenance and response actions for water delivery and hydropower generation infrastructure at the facility.

The Department has reviewed these concerns, along with input from the Basin States, Tribal leaders and others and has concluded that prudent operation of Glen Canyon Dam for 2022 requires a downward adjustment to the water release volume originally planned for this water year to delay or avoid Lake Powell declining further to critical elevations. Given all of the relevant considerations, and consistent with Sections 6 and 7.D. of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the revised operations will be implemented to include the following determinations:

Glen Canyon Dam Operations in 2022 Water Year

- The schedule for Glen Canyon Dam annual releases for water year 2022 will be temporarily changed from 7.48 million acre-feet (maf) to 7.0 maf, a reduction of 480,000 acre-feet (480,000 af reduced release amount).

Implementation of Tier Determinations

- To ensure operational neutrality with respect to the 480,000 af reduced release amount:
 - For projections of Lake Powell elevations, the August 24-Month Study determinations will be made as if the 480,000 af reduced release amount is not present in Lake Powell;
 - For projections of Lake Mead elevations, the August 24-Month Study determinations will be made as if the 480,000 af reduced release amount is present in Lake Mead;
 - The foregoing approach to operational neutrality and tier determinations will be made in the August 2022 24-Month Study projections for water year /calendar year 2023 and all subsequent tier determinations under the 2007 Interim Guidelines and the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan or until such time as the 480,000 af reduced release amount is fully released from Glen Canyon Dam.
- Consistent with the provisions of the 2007 Interim Guidelines and to preserve the benefits to Glen Canyon Dam facilities and operations in 2023, Reclamation will consult with the Basin States on monthly and annual operations.

Accounting for the Reduced Release amount for Water Year 2022

- Reclamation will take appropriate actions to account for and track the 480,000 af reduced release amount in subsequent years.
- Reclamation will evaluate continuing risks of Lake Powell and Lake Mead declining below critical elevations and develop strategies to mitigate and reduce such risks.
- Reclamation will address future releases of the 480,000 af reduced release amount from Lake Powell in an appropriate manner, and at an appropriate time, and will seek support from the Basin States for any such future releases given all relevant operational considerations for Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam.

We deeply appreciate the consensus implementation actions contained in the 2022 Drought Response Operations Plan submitted to the Department on April 21, 2022 and we will ensure that the enhanced releases from Flaming Gorge are implemented in addition to implementing the reduced release amount from Glen Canyon Dam. These combined actions have received consensus support from the Basin States.⁷⁹ We have also received written support from the Colorado River Indian Tribes and the Gila River Indian Community, while other partners have also expressed general agreement with these actions. We believe these consensus approaches are superior to the exercise of unilateral action by the Department to address emergency conditions under either the Drought Response Operations Agreement or the 2007 Interim Guidelines.⁸⁰ The

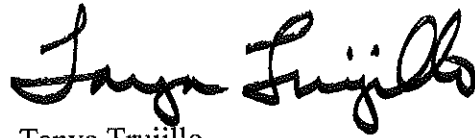
⁷⁹ See Letter from Governor's representatives, Colorado River Basin States (April 22, 2022).

⁸⁰ See e.g., Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead, Sec. XI, G., at Sec. 7.D. (73 Fed. Reg. at 19892 (April 11, 2008)); Record of Decision - Operation of Flaming Gorge Dam, Action Alternative at p. 4, Sec. III (Feb. 16, 2006).

Department of the Interior and Reclamation will ensure appropriate consultation with the Basin States, Tribes, the Republic of Mexico, municipal and agricultural water users, water districts, federal and state agencies, and NGOs to address the present risks facing the Basin, continue to consult and coordinate with the Basin States pursuant to the 2007 Interim Guidelines and work cooperatively with all interested parties on efforts to address long-term supply and demand imbalances, including development of post-2026 operating guidelines.

We appreciate your support and cooperation as we continue to address the current issues and risks facing the Colorado River Basin.

Sincerely,



Tanya Trujillo
Assistant Secretary
for Water and Science

cc: Camille Calimlim Touton, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
David M. Palumbo, Acting Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Wayne G. Pullan, Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation
Jacklynn L. Gould, Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation

Identical Letters Sent To:

Mr. Estevan López
Governor's Representative
State of New Mexico
P.O. Box 25102
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

Mr. Peter Nelson
Governor's Representative
State of California
770 Fairmont Avenue, Suite 100
Glendale, California 91203

Mr. John J. Entsminger
Governor's Representative
State of Nevada
1001 S. Valley View Blvd.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89153

Mr. Patrick T. Tyrrell
Governor's Representative
State of Wyoming
122 West 25th Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

Ms. Rebecca Mitchell
Governor's Representative
State of Colorado
1313 Sherman Street, Room 718
Denver, Colorado 80203

Mr. Gene Shawcroft
Governor's Representative
State of Utah
1426 E. 750 N. Suite 400
Orem, Utah 84097

Mr. Thomas Buschatzke
Governor's Representative
State of Arizona
P.O. Box 36020
Phoenix, Arizona 85067

The Honorable Robert Miguel
Chairman, Ak-Chin Indian Community
42507 West Peters & Nall Road
Maricopa, AZ 85138-3940

The Honorable Sierra Pencille
Chairwoman, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
P.O. Box 1976
Havasu Lake, CA 92363

The Honorable Sherry Cordova
Chairwoman, Cocopah Indian Tribe
14515 South Veterans Drive
Somerton, AZ 85350

The Honorable Amelia Flores
Chairwoman, Colorado River Indian Tribes
26600 Mohave Road
Parker, AZ 85344

The Honorable Bernadine Burnette
President, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
P.O. Box 17779
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268-77

The Honorable Timothy Williams
Chairman, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
500 Merriman Avenue
Needles, CA 92363

The Honorable Jordan Joaquin
President, Fort Yuma - Quechan Tribe
P.O. Box 1899
Yuma, AZ 85366

The Honorable Stephen R. Lewis
Governor, Gila River Indian Community
P.O. Box 97
Sacaton, AZ 85247

The Honorable Eva Kissoon
Chairwoman, Havasupai Tribe
P.O. Box 10
Supai, AZ 86435-0010

The Honorable Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma
Chairman, Hopi Tribe
P.O. Box 123
Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039

The Honorable Damon Clarke
Chairman, Hualapai Tribe
P.O. Box 179
Peach Springs, AZ 86434

The Honorable Ona Segundo
Chairwoman, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians
Tribal Administration Building
#1 North Pipe Spring Road
Fredonia, AZ 86022

The Honorable Curtis Anderson
Chairman, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe
1 Paiute Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89106

The Honorable Laura Parry
Chairwoman, Moapa Band of Paiute Indians
P.O. Box 340
Moapa, NV 89025

The Honorable Jonathan Nez
President, Navajo Nation
P.O. Box 9000
Window Rock, AZ 86515

The Honorable Peter Yucupicio
Chairman, Pascua Yaqui Tribe
7474 South Camino DeOeste
Tucson, AZ 85746

The Honorable Val R. Panteah
Governor, Pueblo of Zuni
P.O. Box 339
Zuni, NM 87327

The Honorable Martin Harvier
President, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian
Community
10005 East Osborn Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85256

The Honorable Terry Rambler
Chairman, San Carlos Apache Tribe
P.O. Box 0
San Carlos, AZ 85550

The Honorable Johnny Lehi Jr.
President, San Juan Southern Paiute
P.O. Box 1989
Tuba City, AZ 86045

The Honorable Ned Norris Jr.
Chairman, Tohono O'odham Nation
P.O. Box 837
Sells, AZ 85634

The Honorable Austin G. Nunez
Chairman, San Xavier District of Tohono
O'odham Nation
2018 West San Xavier Road
Tucson, AZ 85746

The Honorable Denise Flores
Chairwoman, Schuk Toak District of
Tohono O'odham Nation
Highway 86
Sells, AZ 85634

The Honorable Rita Wilson
Chairwoman, Sif Oidak District of Tohono
O'odham Nation
P.O. Box 12038
Casa Grande, AZ 85130

The Honorable Calvin Johnson
Chairman, Tonto Apache Tribe
Tonto Apache Reservation #30
Payson, AZ 85541

The Honorable Gwendena Lee-Gatewood
Chairwoman, White Mountain Apache Tribe
P.O. Box 700
Whiteriver, AZ 85941

The Honorable Jon Huey
Chairman, Yavapai-Apache Nation
2400 West Datsi Street
Camp Verde, AZ 86322

The Honorable Robert Ogo
President, Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe
530 East Merritt Street
Prescott, AZ 86301

The Honorable Edward Velarde
President, Jicarilla Apache Nation
P.O. Box 507
Dulce, NM 87528

The Honorable Melvin Baker
Chairman, Southern Ute Indian Tribe
P.O. Box 737
Ignacio, CO 81137

The Honorable Corrina Bow
Chairwoman, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
440 N Paiute Drive
Cedar City, UT 84721

The Honorable Shaun Chapoose
Chairman, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah
and Ouray Reservation
P.O. Box 190
Fort Duchesne, UT 84026

The Honorable Manual Heart
Chairman, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
124 Mike Wash Rd
Towaoc, CO 81334