LR Letter 03/13/13

LR comments on Basin Study assessing supply and demand in the Colorado River basin to year 2060

CLICK HERE to read the comments of Living Rivers and the Center for Biological Diversity.

Excerpt from our letter:

5. Conclusion

The Basin Study represents a valuable technical achievement by Reclamation staff in applying contemporary modeling tools to generate predictions regarding future Colorado River flows. But these are just numbers, and they are wrought with uncertainty.

Moreover, how these results were presented shielded the public from attaining an understanding of the real challenges that Colorado River water users may be facing far sooner than the study's findings predict. Therefore, Reclamation should task the authors to begin work on a revision that addresses the following:

1) Provide extensive qualitative analysis as to the significant real-world uncertainty associated with the future streamflow predictions.

2) Discuss in far more detail the range and probabilities in future streamflows beyond the 10% average reduction projected by 2060.

3) Specifically address the new critical period (2000-2013) and the likelihood that it will continue. Moreover, if these conditions do persist for several more years, at what point do the study's future streamflow findings lose relevance and Reclamation's modeling needs recalibrating?

4) Detail the history and present status of over-allocation in the Basin, and the strategies that might be pursued to address remedies.

5) Eliminate discussion of demand projections that are not directly connected to Colorado River withdrawals and/or Colorado River water delivery obligations with Mexico.

6) Restrict discussions of new water supply options to water saved through demand-side management and conservation, and only to the extent necessary to help balance the Colorado River's water supply budget.

7) Incorporate an analysis of the Colorado River's long-term needs and potential, relating to issues other than water diversion: critical habitat maintenance and restoration, appropriate recreation and cultural preservation, etc. Explore opportunities for changes in how the river is managed and water is stored and delivered, given the changes in the hydrologic regime, the potential for water conservation, increased instream flows, and the decommissioning of unnecessary storage infrastructure.

This revised effort should be led by a team whose vision for the Colorado River extends beyond the dams and diversions put in place since the signing of the Colorado River Compact. There's more to the future of the Colorado River than how much and where its water can be diverted. Additionally, there's a need for full disclosure about the actual challenges water users may be facing in the near term, and creative discussions about solutions that address the real imbalance on the Colorado: excessive human intervention at the expense of the river's natural integrity. So despite the study's significant shortcomings, it can nonetheless serve as a valuable step in a continuing process that seeks real solution for the whole of the Colorado River, should the Interior Department, and Reclamation specifically, summon the leadership do so.

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Additional information:

Links to ON THE COLORADO articles on this subject

- The One-Dam Solution
- The Water Imbalance of the Colorado River Basin
- Towing Iceburgs to San Pedro
- Pipe Dreams and Schemes
- Aquifer Recharge and Recovery

DOCUMENT ARCHIVE: SUPPLY AND DEMAND STUDY
Final Report RELEASED 12/12/12

- All files combined
- Executive Summary
- Study Report
- Study Report Appendices
- Technical A Report Scenario Development
- Technical B Report Water Supply Assessment
- Technical C Report Water Demand
- Technical D Report System Reliability Metrics
- Technical E Report Options Evaluation
- Technical F Report Options Strategies
- Technical G Report System Reliability

Public Relations

- Webinar of January 9, 2013 (Watch on You Tube)
- Webinar of January 25, 2013
- March 23, 2010 - Agenda
- March 23, 2010 - Comment Form
- March 23, 2010 Power Point
- June 14, 2011 - Power Point
- September 23, 2010 - Power Point
- December 6, 2011 - Power Point
- Colorado River Basin Study Proposal

- May 2011 - Fact Sheet
- Leadership Change
- Long-term Augmentation Report
- Partners
- USBR News: Water Supply Demand Study Seeks Input To Resolve Imbalances
- USBR News: Water Supply Demand Study Interim Report
- SECURE Water Report
- SECURE Water Act

Previous Work

- 1950 - CRSP
- 1971 LCR Study
- 1971 - LCR App V
- 1971 - LCR App X
- 1971 - LCR App XI
- 1971 - UCR Study
- 1971 - UCR App V
- 1971 - UCR App X
- 1971 - UCR App XI
- 1963 - PSWP App
- 1964 - PSWP Report

Interim Report No. 1

- Executive Summary
- Status Report
- Tech Memo (website)
- Tech Report A
- Tech Report B
- Tech Report B app
- Tech Report B app Revised
- Tech Report C
- Tech Report D
- Tech Report D Revised

Public Comments

- ITCA
- KB Engineering
- Living Rivers
- NGOs
- NPCA
- NRDC
- NWF
- Pascua Yaqui
- PTF
- TNC
- Yavapai Apache

Public Options

- Categorizations Report
- Descriptions Report
- Fact Sheet Imbalance Options
- Options Submittal Report

Technical Part B

- Technical Report B
- Tech Report B app Revised
- Technical Report B appendix

Technical Part C

- Technical Memo C report
- Tech C1
- Tech C2
- Tech C3
- Tech C4
- Tech C5
- Tech C6
- Tech C7
- Tech C8
- Tech C9
- Tech C10
- Tech detail (website)

Tecnical Report D

- Technical Report D
  Tech Report D Revised