

Comments Received At Public Meetings

This section contains oral comments received during the public meetings from the following:

- PC-1 Sierra Club, Southwest Water Committee
- PC-2 Living Rivers

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Speaker Request Form

Please write clearly so that we do not misspell any personal details. Give the completed card to a project representative prior to the meeting's comment session.

4/5/07
Date

JIM WECHSLER
Name*

Address* Please check this box if you'd like your address withheld from publication

2975 EMERSON AVE.
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Sierra Club Southwest Waters Committee
Organization

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Telephone

**Mandatory Information*

PC-1

1 MR. FULP: June actually. I can almost guarantee
2 there will be discussion. Yes.
3 MS. HOUSTON: Janice Houston, University of Utah.
4 Just a quick question about water delivery. I see that
5 on the slide. Was there any consideration taken into
6 the modeling of water delivery with the potential
7 project that the State of Utah is kicking around about
8 building of the pipeline from Lake Powell to St. George?
9 MR. FULP: There was not any assumption made with
10 regard to that. Now, what we would point out that we
11 did take the, you know, essentially the depletion
12 schedules that are in the model, and I think you're
13 probably familiar with that, that the Upper Colorado
14 River Commission has supplied. Those are constant
15 through the alternatives and no additional assumptions
16 were made.
17 Anyone else?
18 (BEGINNING OF COMMENT PORTION)
19 MR. WECHSLER: I'm Jim Wechsler, I'm with the
20 Sierra Club Southwest Waters Committee, which is a
21 Regional committee, and we were one of the environmental
22 groups that submitted the conservation before shortage
23 proposal which was originally submitted as a
24 conservation before shortage and then later adapted to
25 the basin states. And I haven't read the DEIS yet. I

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PC-1

1 have been practicing with the Manhattan telephone book,
2 but I haven't read it yet. And so these comments are
3 all taken from somebody else who glanced at Volume I and
4 this managed to arrive in my E-mail this morning and I
5 think it needs some clarification.

6 It's about how the conservation before shortage is
7 represented in this DEIS. One thing that he noticed,
8 and other people have said, is that the term voluntary
9 shortage is quite common. We actually think that -- we
10 didn't think anybody needs practice, and so we think
11 voluntary conservation would probably be a better way to
12 say it. Or as it said in one place, voluntary
13 compensated reductions in water use. As Terry pointed
14 out, compensation is a major feature. And another
15 comment is that the ICS intentionally created surplus
16 under the conservation before shortage proposal, can be
17 assigned to other entities, and they aren't specified.
18 And the other entities that we would -- was in our mind
19 and we thought in our proposal were U.S. agencies, non
20 governmental organizations, Mexican agencies and water
21 users. So for unassigned, read that.

22 And I'm not sure this is correct. But he said
23 that the way he read it was that the federal funding for
24 ICS appeared to be limited to flows that were bypassed
25 to the wetlands of Mexico to the Senega to Santa Clara.

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PC-1

1 If it gives that impression, it's wrong, and I think
2 everybody agrees that would be wrong. 4
3 And finally, that the ICS has talked about,
4 relative to evaluation before shortage, suggests that
5 all of it is assigned to Mexico. One of the things that
6 the conservation before shortage proposal does is it's 5
7 saying why not add Mexico to the mix, not just the basin
8 states can create these, through extraordinary
9 conservation events, a intentionally created surplus,
10 but Mexico could as well. The reason for doing that is
11 one, it adds flexibility and two, it does go directly to
12 something we're interested in, which is the Delta area
13 New Mexico. And to give an example of how you could add
14 Mexico into that mix is, for example, southern Nevada is
15 looking for more water. Southern Nevada could fund a
16 project in Mexico that would conserve water. Some of
17 that water would presumably go to Mexico, and Mexico,
18 we've certainly had talks with them about the
19 possibility of using some of their, what amounts to
20 additional water. I mean, this could be lots of things.
21 But for example, taking the most, perhaps most
22 significant asset would be for southern Nevada to say
23 construct a desalinization plant for agricultural runoff
24 in Mexico, give some portion of that water back to
25 Mexico. 8

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PC-1

1 We would only be happy if we could convince Mexico
2 in putting some of that to environmental uses in Mexico.
3 The other portion would be stored in Lake Mead for
4 southern Nevada's use. So, that that's a way for
5 southern Nevada to gain more water out of the total
6 system. That's one concept there, and that's why we
7 added or suggested adding Mexico to the mix.

9

8 And those are just things I wanted to point out
9 when you're reading this. Thanks.

10 MS. YODER: Thanks Jim.

11 MR. KANZER: I noticed on the list of areas where
12 hard copies are available, none in western Colorado?
13 I'm wondering whether the western area office could
14 receive a copy?

10

15 MR. FULP: Absolutely.

16 MR. KANZER: Is this the full list, or what do you
17 have to do to -- or maybe --

18 MR. FULP: We'll make sure they have it, we'll make
19 sure they get a hard copy right away, that's an
20 oversight.

21 (End of questions and comment session.)

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0012

PC-1

1 STATE OF UTAH)
 2
 3 COUNTY OF SALT LAKE)
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5
 6 I, Linda J. Smurthwaite, Certified Shorthand
 7 Reporter, Registered Professional Reporter, and notary
 8 public within and for the county of Salt Lake, State of
 9 Utah do hereby certify:

10 That the foregoing proceedings were taken by me at
 11 the time and place set forth herein, and was taken down
 12 by me in shorthand and thereafter transcribed into
 13 typewriting under my direction and supervision.

14 That the foregoing pages contain a true and
 15 correct transcription of my said shorthand notes so
 16 taken.

17 In Witness Whereof, I have subscribed my name this
 18 7th day of April, 2007.
 19
 20

21 LINDA J. SMURTHWAITE
 22 CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER
 23
 24
 25

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PC-1

Reponses to Comment Letter PC-1

PC-1-1

Your comment is noted. No change to the Final EIS was necessary.

PC-1-2

See response to Comment No. G-5-22.

PC-1-3

See responses to Comment Nos. G-5-21 through G-5-22.

PC-1-4 and PC-1-9

See response to Comment No. F-5-2 and F-5-5.

PC-1-10

The Draft EIS was electronically available at the Reclamation project website and CD's and hard copies were made available upon request. In addition, copies of the EIS were made available for public inspection at various libraries and Reclamation offices within the Upper and Lower Colorado Regions and in Southern California.

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Please write clearly so that we do not misspell any personal details. Give the completed card to a project representative prior to the meeting's comment session.

4/4/07
Date

JOHN WEISHEIT (WHY-SIGHT)
Name*

PO BOX 466 MOAB UT 84532
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LIVING RIVERS
Organization

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Telephone

**Mandatory Information*

PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 Yes.

2 VAL DANOS: What's the nature of these meetings in
3 California? Are they hearings or --

4 TERRY FULP: No, not at all. It's a request from
5 an agency for information, so -- and so we'll -- we'll do
6 that. We try to meet all the requests we get, so ...

7 They are not public hearings. They're just
8 requests for either additional information or some dialogue
9 in terms of explaining what the analysis is.

10 Okay. If that's the case, then we'll turn it back
11 over to you, and ask you if anyone would like to make a
12 public comment, please -- please do so.

13 NAN YODER: Okay. I have one.

14 Was anyone else going to be brave?

15 Okay. Well, then the spotlight is for
16 John Weisheit. And if you would like to get up and give us
17 your comment, we'd appreciate it.

18 JOHN WEISHEIT: My name is John Weisheit. I am
19 the conservation director of Living Rivers. Our base is in
20 Moab, Utah. I'm also a Colorado River Keeper, which has an
21 affiliation of an international organization called the
22 Water Keeper Alliance. As background, we submitted comments
23 as an organization during scoping called the One Dam
24 Solution, and it is a dam-decommissioning alternative to
25 decommission Glen Canyon Dam.

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PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 The reason is to save water through the loss of
2 evaporation because of its existence, to also reduce
3 salinity in the Colorado River, and also to take care of the
4 environmental problems that are being -- that are occurring
5 in Grand Canyon National Park as the result of the
6 operations of Glen Canyon Dam.

7 This alternative was not -- was rejected in this
8 EIS. There is a -- a ban, congressional rider, against
9 federal funds being used to study -- to decommissioning of
10 Glen Canyon Dam, and that is why it was not considered as an
11 alternative.

12 I did bring some copies of our document. It's
13 outside the door on a chair on the right as you're leaving
14 if you care to look at it. I have extra copies in my
15 backpack, too, in case we run out.

16 These are my comments.

17 Models are only as valuable as the inputs they
18 receive. While the sophistication and effort put into these
19 projections are unprecedented and well-appreciated, the
20 models' inputs, however, fail to provide the public the
21 results necessary from which to make an informed decision as
22 to merits of any of the proposed alternatives.

23 Garbage in, garbage out, as they say, but this
24 garbage is so well masked that the people of the Colorado
25 River Basin are being asked to put the rubber stamp on a

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PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 Katrina in the making. Those levees in New Orleans did not
2 hold, nor will the assumptions painted on what otherwise is
3 probably a very valuable model.

4 Scientists have been in agreement for decades that
5 the Colorado River flows through the past century were among
6 the wettest in 1200 years. Scientists are also in agreement
7 that the Colorado River Basin in modern times has warmed
8 upwards to two degrees during this period, and the trend is
9 expected to continue, compromising streamflows upwards of 20
10 percent in the next 50 years.

11 We're now in the longest drought in recorded
12 history. Things are changing all over the Basin, but not at
13 the Bureau of Reclamation.

14 The results produced by their inflated inputs are
15 based on historical streamflows that, while useful, in and
16 of themselves must not alone be used to gauge future runoff.

17 Failing to account for a more long-term historical
18 view of streamflow coupled with the climate change we are
19 already experiencing is tremendously misleading to the
20 public when developing shortage strategies.

21 Even under Reclamation's inflated scenario, this
22 system is headed for an imbalance of water use, namely an
23 oversupply of 400,000 acre-feet annually in the next 50
24 years. Corrected for a more accurate presentation --
25 representation of historical streamflow, this increases to

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PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 1.1 million-acre-feet.

2 But most importantly, we must begin to accept the
3 reality of climate change. Anyone can notice how the
4 reservoirs are dropping. A ten percent reduction on
5 long-term flow estimates show an annual deficit right now of
6 1.1 million acre-feet rising to 2.8 million acre-feet by
7 2060.

8 Adjust this to 20 percent, as an increasing number
9 of scientists are recommending, and we're looking at a
10 2.6 million -- million acre-feet deficit now, and nearly
11 4 million acre-feet in 50 years.

12 We're at ground zero tonight. Phoenix, Chandler,
13 Tucson are not going to be protected by token changes in
14 reservoir operations or even its ground-water banking
15 Arizona is first in line for cuts, and there is no plan or
16 how -- for how the state will survive if the rosy inputs put
17 into this model evaporate away as Lakes Powell and Mead drop
18 lower and lower.

19 The public is quite fortunate that the National
20 Research Council has completed its recent Colorado River
21 Report at this time. It reiterates the warnings that have
22 yet found their way into the assumptions used by this model.
23 We certainly hope these changes in the final EIS will
24 present a more realistic view of what the future may hold.

25 And the public would also benefit from a more

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PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 comprehensive presentation of what the real benefits are to
2 these minimal dam operational changes it is being asked to
3 support.

4 Chart 4.3, dash, 26 and 27 illustrate that a
5 significant amount of water savings, at least in terms of
6 increased levels for Lake Mead, occur not because of new
7 operating plans that are the focus of these documents, but
8 the results of anticipated but as yet mostly undetermined
9 water-conservation activities.

10 It's already clear in looking at the plotted data
11 represented from the 50th percentile the net volume of
12 stored water in Lake Powell and Mead is greater under the No
13 Action Alternative than what the Basin States -- States hope
14 to implement.

15 Reclamation must present a comparable analysis of
16 strictly the reservoir-operation component of the Basin
17 States Alternative, not volumes of studies and charts based
18 on undefined activities that may be exaggerating these
19 limited benefits.

20 There is no question that the objective of this
21 DEIS is critical or that valuable work has not gone into
22 developing the model, but the public is anxiously awaiting
23 some assurances that the water managers they rely on will
24 develop a real strategy to guide us through what looks to be
25 a very parched future ahead.

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PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 Unfortunately, Reclamation is still hoping history
2 repeats itself and high flows will bail us out as demand
3 continues to grow and temperatures continue to rise. But
4 we're already at the end of what the river has historically
5 provided.

11

6 There's no water left, and climate change is
7 taking what their -- what's there back. It's time for
8 Reclamation to admit this and get on with the real task
9 ahead: Developing a solution for managing the system headed
10 for failure.

12

11 Thank you.

12 NAN YODER: John, thank you for your comment.

13 Is there anyone else? No?

14 Okay. All right. So we'll remind you one more
15 time that we're in our public-comment period. It closes
16 April 30th. And we are more than welcome to hear from you
17 tonight or also from here forward to fax or e-mail. And
18 again, your input is valuable to our process. Thank you
19 very much.

20 (Whereupon the presentation was concluded at
21 7:30 p.m.)

22 (Whereupon the public-comment session at this
23 public meeting was concluded at 9:00 p.m.)

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PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

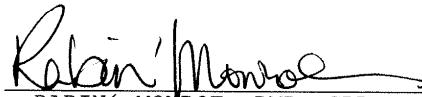
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STATE OF ARIZONA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF MARICOPA)

BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing Public Meeting was taken before me, RABIN' MONROE, RMR, CRR, a Certified Reporter, No. 50653, in and for the County of Maricopa, State of Arizona; that the proceedings were taken down by me in machine shorthand and thereafter transcribed by computer-aided transcription under my supervision and direction; that the foregoing pages, numbered from 1 to 24, inclusive, constitute a true and accurate excerpt of all the proceedings had upon the taking of said public meeting, all done to the best of my skill and ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am in no way related to any of the parties hereto, nor am I in any way interested in the outcome hereof.

DATED in Phoenix, Arizona, this 20th day of April, 2007.


RABIN' MONROE, RMR, CRR
CR #50653

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PC-2

Reponses to Comment Letter PC-2

PC-2-1 and PC-2-2

See response to Comment No. G-6-18.

PC-2-3 through PC-2-7

Your comment is addressed in the general response pertaining to climate changes and hydrologic variability in the introduction to Volume IV of the Final EIS. Section 4.2 of the Final EIS has been enhanced and two new appendices (Appendix T and Appendix U) have been added to provide additional information regarding the potential impacts of climate change and hydrologic variability.

PC-2-8 through PC-2-10

The information requested is provided in the Draft and the Final EIS in Section 4.4.5.1. A sensitivity analysis for each of the action alternatives for total water deliveries to each state is displayed with and without the storage and delivery mechanism.

PC-2-11 through PC-2-12

Your comment is addressed in the general response pertaining to climate changes and hydrologic variability in the introduction to Volume IV of the Final EIS. Section 4.2 of the Final EIS has been enhanced and two new appendices (Appendix T and Appendix U) have been added to provide additional information regarding the potential impacts of climate change and hydrologic variability.

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