

**The Colorado River Commission of Nevada (Commission) meeting was held at 1:33 p.m. on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at the Clark County Government Center, Commission Chambers, 500 South Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89155.**

**COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Chairwoman	Puoy K. Premsrirut
Vice Chairwoman	Kara J. Kelley
Commissioner	Cody Winterton
Commissioner	Justin Jones
Commissioner	Marilyn Kirkpatrick

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE**

Commissioner	Allen J. Puliz
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**DEPUTY ATTORNEY(S) GENERAL**

Special Counsel, Attorney General	Michelle D. Briggs
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**COMMISSION STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Executive Director	Eric Witkoski
Senior Assistant Director	Sara Price
Chief of Finance and Administration	Douglas N. Beatty
Assistant Director, Energy Information Systems	Kaleb Hall
Assistant Director, Engineering and Operations	Bob Reese
Assistant Director, Hydropower	Gail Bates
Assistant Director, Natural Resources	Warren Turkett, Ph.D.
Chief Accountant	Gail L. Benton
Hydropower Program Manager	Craig Pyper
Hydropower Engineer	Stevie Espinosa
Senior Energy Accountant	Stephanie Salleroli
System Coordinator	Chris Smith
Executive Assistant Manager	Gina L. Goodman
Office Manager	Noah Fischel
Administrative Assistant III	Saira Castillo
Administrative Assistant II	Tamisha Randolph
Administrative Assistant II	Joshua Cleveland

**OTHERS PRESENT: REPRESENTING**

City of Boulder City  
Codale Electric Supply  
College of Southern Nevada  
Las Vegas Valley Water District  
NV Energy  
NV Energy  
Peak Substation Services, LLC  
Southern Nevada Water Authority  
Self

Joseph Stubitz  
Mchael Callewaert  
Tina Dobbs  
Laura Browning  
Abigail Watkins  
Michael Hulin  
Jason Harris  
Jordan Bunker  
Reese Fry

**COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION OF NEVADA**

**MEETING OF**

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

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**COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION OF NEVADA**

**MEETING OF**

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

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The Colorado River Commission of Nevada (Commission) meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Premsrirut at 1:33 p.m., followed by the pledge of allegiance.

**A. Conformance to Open Meeting Law.**

Executive Director, Eric Witkoski confirmed that the meeting was posted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

**B. Comments from the public. Members of the public are invited to comment on items on the meeting agenda or on items not contained therein. No action may be taken on a matter raised during public comment until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item for possible action.**

Chairwoman Premsrirut asked if there were any comments from the public. There were none.

**C. *For Possible Action:* Approval of minutes of the July 11, 2023, and July 31, 2023, meeting.**

Vice Chairwoman Kelley moved for approval the minutes of the July 11, 2023, and July 31, 2023, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Justin Jones and approved by unanimous vote.

**D. *For Possible Action:* Consideration of and possible action to approve contract CRCBF-10 between successful bidder, Peak Substation Services, and the Colorado River Commission of Nevada based on bid solicitation 69CRC-S2394 for Boulder Flats Solar Interconnection Project Transmission Line Steel.**

**E. *For Possible Action:* Consideration of and possible action to approve contract CRCBF-11 between successful bidder, Peak Substation Services, and the Colorado River Commission of Nevada based on bid solicitation 69CRC-S2395/69CRC-S2451 for Boulder Flats Solar Interconnection Project for Hardware & Assemblies.**

**F. *For Possible Action:* Consideration of and possible action to approve contract CRCBF-12 between successful bidder, Codale Electric Supply, and the Colorado River Commission of Nevada based on bid solicitation 69CRC-S2396 for Boulder Flats Solar Interconnection Project for Conductor.**

**G. *For Possible Action:* Consideration of and possible action to approve contract CRCBF-13 between successful bidder, Peak Substation Services, and the Colorado River Commission of Nevada based on bid solicitation 69CRC-S2397 for Boulder Flats Solar Interconnection Project for Fiber.**

Mr. Witkoski introduced Agenda DEF&G items stating that the proposed contracts are related and put forward for approval as part of work the Commission will perform for Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) for the electrical support system for the Boulder Flats Solar project. It is anticipated that no one single supplier can provide a bid for all items, thus the Contracts may be awarded for respective parts. Representatives from the Parties for these contracts are Jason Harris from Peak Substation Services, LLC (Peak) and Michael Callewaert from Codale Electric Supply (Codale) and are available should the Commission have any questions.

Assistant Director, Engineering and Operations Robert Reese addressed the Commission explaining that Pursuant to NRS 538.161, the Commission may execute contracts, for the planning, and development of any facilities for the generation or transmission of electricity for the greatest possible benefit to the state. Additionally, the Commission has a Facilities Development Agreement with the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) for the purpose of "creating a cooperative relationship to jointly develop, operate, maintain, use and replace a Power System" for SNWA and its members. SNWA has requested the Commission design, procure, and construct a new 230kV switchyard and ten-mile long 230kV transmission line in Boulder City, Nevada for SNWA's Boulder Flats Solar Project.

The Commission has awarded several material contracts for the 230 KV switchyard. The items being presented for award are for the 10-mile line extension of the Meade Newport 230KV line that will attach to the new existing 230KV switch yard. The transmission line steel are the towers for the line. The hardware assemblies, insulators, and clips are everything to do the conductors. The fiber optic is a two-stage component. It sits high above the towers, and it provides for lightning protection and all the communications necessary for relaying and monitoring of the system and the Commissions assets. SNWA has committed to funding this project.

Chairwoman Premsrirut asked if it was accurate to state that among the four bid items the bids that were received, were selected for either the lowest bid in terms of pricing or alternatively only the qualified bid.

Mr. Reese responded only qualified bidders. The bids for all the items were sent to 23 to 26 qualified vendors. There was either a sole bidder or the most economical bidder that was selected.

Chairwoman Premsrirut asked Executive Director Witkoski that in terms of the various bids and while looking through the data points Peak was selected. Peak was either the lowest qualified bid or alternatively the sole qualified bidder and Codale was the lowest qualified bid.

Mr. Witkoski and Mr. Reese responded that is correct.

Chairwoman Premsrirut confirmed with Staff that SNWA is online for the funding and is prepared for the funding in accordance with the timeline that these contracts come due.

Mr. Reese responded that is correct.

Mr. Reese clarified that the bids are intended to be awarded to the lowest qualified vendors not just the lowest bidder.

Chairwoman Premsrirut thanked the contract representatives that were present for these items and stated that even though these contracts were discussed in less than 5 minutes, there are many others and staff members involved with making this seem like a very seamless approval.

**Vice Chairwoman Kelley moved for approval of the Boulder Flats Solar Interconnection award of bids and Contracts for Item D-G. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Justin Jones and approved by unanimous vote.**

**H. *For Information Only:* Presentation by representative from Bureau of Reclamation at Hoover Dam regarding Visitor Center cost of operations and maintenance, revenue shortfall, and options to raise revenue to pay for the costs of operations to reduce costs paid by hydropower contractors.**

Mr. Witkoski introduced Ms. Terry Saumier, a civil engineer from Lower Colorado River Basin with Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The background for this presentation is that the agency's hydropower staff meets with the Bureau of Reclamation, Hoover Dam quarterly. The committee is named Engineering and Operations Committee (EOC). There is a 10-year plan, the committee looks at the investments that need to be made, revenues, costs, and reviews to discuss any issues with the visitor center.

The visitor center has a long history started in the 1980s and completed in the 90s. There were some cost overruns. The original cost estimate was \$32 million but the cost ended up over \$122 million. Nevada contractors will be paying the cost of building the Visitor Center until 2047 when the bonds associated with the Visitor Center will be paid off.

The cost of operations and the revenue for the visitor center are not matching up. This has been aggravated by COVID due to shut down and reduction in travel. The following presentation provided by Ms. Saumier is an informational agenda item.

Facilities Service Manager, Terry Saumier provided a presentation on Hoover Dam Public Visitation Status, Challenges and Considerations. A copy of the presentation is attached and made a part of the minutes (See Attachment A).

Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked, why does the BOR have to wait until 2025 to adjust the budget? This appears to be in dire strait and 2025 is a whole year away in a cycle.

Ms. Saumier responded that the budget for 2025 is being worked on at this time. The 2024 budget is already approved by the power customers.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked if it is the Commission budget or the BOR budget.

Ms. Saumier stated the Boulder Canyon Project (BCP) budget has already been approved for 2024.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated then for 2025 seeing that visitor volume has decreased and has not gone back to the previous attendance is it anticipated that the volume will stay low as there is a dip in entertainment related visitors.

What would likely be the right entry fee amount to make sure that kids living in Nevada can see and experience the Hoover Dam. Tourists are one thing, but at the end of the day, we don't want Nevadans left out.

Ms. Saumier responded while looking at all the costs there are talks at a fee around \$15 a car. Parking at Hoover Dam would be included so visitors could utilize all the spaces at no additional cost unless there was a desire to take the tour.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated parking can get expensive anywhere that you go, so an all-in-one inclusive could be a way.

Vice Chairwoman Kelley asked how much revenue does the BOR expect that \$15 a car to raise in those estimations?

Ms. Saumier stated it would close the gap needed to bring the BOR pretty close to that \$25 million which is needed for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and for major repairs and replacements.

Vice Chairwoman Kelley asked if Ms. Saumier could help the Commission understand the total budget and its major pieces.

Ms. Saumier responded that the total budget to cover everything associated with visitor services is about \$25 million a year. The BOR would take out \$15 million that comes from ticket sales and entry fees bringing BCP's budget to \$25million. So, all of BCP's revenue sources together coming from visitor services would add up to about \$25 million.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked if BOR applied for Round 20 project proposals for funding from Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Ms. Saumier stated that in this upcoming round preliminary packages are due Friday, September 22, 2023.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated those are places where the Commission can help at the County or National Association of Counties (NACO). Commissioner Kirkpatrick would be interested once submitted if she could be on the lookout for them.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked about the biggest O&M costs for the next five years.

Ms. Saumier responded that the regular O&M costs, water wastewater treatment down at the Dam, cleaning contracts for all the outdoor areas, the visitor centers, the parking garages, trash, road maintenance, and sidewalks.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated the road maintenance is new, correct.

Ms. Saumier replied, yes. Since the opening of the bridge.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated then there is an initial amount of money for roads that should keep going for ten years.

Ms. Saumier stated the BOR got some Federal Highway Administration money through that program, but it has primarily been for chip sealing and not for redoing the roadways.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated that is the way it works, right. A road is built and then five years later, you get a seal.

Ms. Saumier said yes, about five years. The BOR tried to balance it out with that. The BOR has been doing it in pieces because with Reclamation as a whole, there are quite a few recreation areas, so everyone is competing for those same dollars. The BOR has been piecemealing it, it has only been since 2018 that Reclamation has been part of the program. It is new for BOR as far as the major projects are concerned, the visitor center has not been touched since it was built. It opened in 1995. Most of the money, redid the theater level with SNPLMA funding and just before COVID; that was finished. BOR got funding for our exhibit level. BOR have funding right now around 18 mil to do the observation level in our visitor center.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked if there were no state grants that be gotten. Grants are one-time things. There is so much uncertainty right now that \$25 million might have to be cut where the budget is only \$18 million going forward. As much as the BOR would like to increase the budgets, BOR might have to start making some cuts if things go in a different direction. The next couple of years are going to be somewhat telling of which direction we are headed. This is why Commissioner Kirkpatrick was asking if maybe there are some things between the state or some other agencies that the Commission could fund in the meantime. In the short term, how do we go in the direction where it looks nice as from experience trying to get a piece of federal legislation is a long process.

Ms. Saumier stated that it is what the BOR has historically done. Which is put band-aids on things and milk things along, as long as possible. The major renovation of the exhibit level would not be possible if not for SNPLMA. While SNPLMA is there and there is money in SNPLMA, BOR is going to seek that funding. But historically, what has happened is, going into the 10-year plan is to do what absolutely cannot wait any longer. It is the first thing, understandably, that a power customer is going to want to delay, if possible. If there is a choice to fix one of the generators or something major in the plant or spend \$4 mil on the visitor center, Ms. Saumier understands the power customer preference to spend it in the plant. BOR tries to be very careful with what projects are done.

This was a great opportunity to really get to enhance the whole exhibit experience. It was never really developed when the visitor center opened. It was reported that the project was way over budget, but this is really the first time it has had a real full visitor center experience. Thank goodness for SNPLMA for providing this opportunity.

Commission Puliz asked who the owner of the parking lot on the Nevada side of the Hoover Dam (Dam) used by people to walk up the bridge to see the Dam, is there any way to charge a parking fee to generate some extra cash.

Ms. Saumier stated the power customers pay for the parking lot and maintenance of the walkway. It was a SNPLMA funded project to develop it. The power customers pay for all operation and maintenance costs. That is part of one of the expenses that would be built into that proposed entry fee.

Commissioner Puliz clarified the entry fee would be charged to enter that parking lot as it is free now. People get to go there and walk out on the bridge look at the Dam and take pictures.

Ms. Saumier stated the parking lot is within the security zone. That parking lot would be incorporated into the area for the entry fee.

Commissioner Winterton asked when BOR did the analysis about \$15 a car, did the BOR make any assumptions about what the decrease would be once people are charged. In other words, it is free today, were there any assumptions that the BOR would expect less people to be visiting it once charges are started.

Ms. Saumier stated the BOR does not assume it would affect visitation very much. Right now, people will drive up to security with \$20 bills hanging out the window because they are shocked that they do not have to pay anything.

Commissioner Winterton asked has the BOR considered or explored a strongly suggested donation program where a person or family would not feel obligated to donate, presented not as a requirement. Where it is perhaps \$20 a family. It is a suggested donation for anyone who would like to help or something along those lines, is that feasible.

Ms. Saumier will have to ask our Solicitors' office if there are any limitations on that. It is not something she has knowledge of currently.

Commissioner Winterton stated that is probably something the BOR could put in place immediately. Perhaps, a little glossy handout or something that strongly encourages the public to donate to help support the employees or the landmark but is not required. The public would not have a problem with making the donation.

Ms. Saumier stated she would bring the inquiry back to the solicitors' office.

Vice Chairwoman Kelley stated that Ms. Saumier shared with the Commission how you personally and the BOR is unable to lobby and not knowing enough about federal politics to understand how something like this gets changed. There are people like us, our customers, the BOR customers on the power side, there is a visitor interest for Southern Nevada as well as for Arizona and lot of conversations on different things. To your knowledge, is there any group, person, or entity that you know is working on this.

Mr. Witkoski commented Staff is having discussions with the Commission's Arizona counterparts. There are a couple on the federal level being reviewed. Ms. Saumier mentioned the item about Post-Retirement Benefits (PRB). The Commission has not really been briefed on that issue because it has gone on for 20 years.

It is an issue, there is \$42 mil in an account that if the Commission can get some blessing from Congress, BOR feels it could be used to help with the plant. Part of those discussions Staff is having with Arizona which is also looking at PRBs. Arizona is a little farther ahead of Nevada on considering this issue. This is the reason for the discussion today. If this is something that the Commission would want to be involved with, Mr. Witkoski will work with our counterparts in Arizona, and Staff will also try to build alliances with California and Metropolitan. Staff are gearing up to work on that PRB issue as there is \$42 mil just sitting there.

This issue shared today is just at the beginning stage for the Commission staff.

Chairwoman Premsrirut asked about pre-COVID operations. It is still working at a shortfall,

Ms. Saumier stated the BOR did not historically look at visitor services expenses the same way. The process began and to what really are all the cost to host the visitors. For example, the cost of when there was a police force or now that there is a Security Response Force. Those expenses were not incorporated as being a portion assigned to visitor services. However, certainly there is a much larger security response force being opened to the public than a closed facility. We started looking at all those kinds of expenses which go into being opened to the public, do we do it exclusively or more of it to host the public. Staff have gone through all the expenses.

BOR was much closer to covering the O&M cost, but not close to being able to cover any kind of capital improvements. The site has things that are really falling apart, as far as the improvements needed to be made to the visitor center and the types of facilities where band-aids were placed on things. The visitor center has sandstone floors that are literally crumbling. So, now the expenses are several million dollars. This has been kind of an evolutionary thing. When looking at what these expenses were when it was the highway is not the same as what it looks like now that these costs are all completely associated with the public that are visiting the Dams and not just people passing through. The O&M costs before COVID were much closer to being covered.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) charges to get into certain places and reservations and all that. She asked what makes this different? What about this ACT states that BOR cannot charge when BLM is doing it.

Ms. Saumier responded; I am not an expert.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick addressed Mr. Witkoski to see if he had the answer.

Mr. Witkoski stated Ms. Briggs can comment on that. The legal Staff has looked at the law. Basically, national parks can charge, but the Secretary of interior has a restriction and Bureau of Reclamation is under the Secretary of Interior.

Ms. Briggs confirmed that the act prohibits the Bureau of Reclamation from charging an entrance fee for property they maintain it is not specific to Hoover Dam.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated the reason for my concern is that 2.3 million people live here, and maybe a million understand what the Hoover Dam is and why it exists. Nevada does not teach it in 4th grade anymore. This is such a historical and important piece to the Western United States. I sit on the National Association of Counties, which represents counties, I would be happy to bring a resolution to allow that to happen. Collecting letters for the Commission, Clark County Commission to gather support. She does not want the Nevada experience to go away, for one.

Yet, more importantly today, people are not paying attention to water, electricity, renewables, renewable portfolio standard (RPS), all those things. This is one thing Hoover Dam does for everybody, not just us. If choosing to go on a campaign, I am all in, but we must be altogether. We could be asking the Governor, the western states, have a coalition, Southern Nevada Water Authority, we all need to educate people on the importance of the Hoover Dam. It is the State's history. Personally, I do not like getting presentations without having an action item, let's fix it. Presentations and no action on them because let's fix it. She asked what Staff wants the Commission to do.

Mr. Witkoski stated Staff was reluctant in making this an action due to the sensitivity of the issues related to tourism and the people of Nevada that visit the Dam. Staff wanted BOR to present the information and let the Commission decide as to whether to make it an action item at the October 10, 2023, meeting. Staff can come back with a plan.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated what would be helpful, but it would also be helpful to know if BOR can put out a donation box. Donation boxes are sighted in front of the Smithsonian and other museums. Explore that option, as well.

Mr. Witkoski stated Staff has discussed this a little bit with the Representative from the Governor's Office and hopes they are in attendance today. He will share this information.

Commissioner Winterton asked Ms. Briggs for a quick legal analysis of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to see if it prohibits donations because it could literally put that in place tomorrow. BOR could get something like a commemorative pin that would cost a dollar to produce and some quick programs that can be put in place where people come in, the BOR could literally put that in place in two months as long as it is legally allowed. He added that he cannot imagine why it would not be allowed because it is not mandatory or required. It would be a great way to generate revenue.

Chairwoman Premsrirut stated it is preferred using this approach to having all the information and having a presentation primarily because our Commission is comprised of a wide variety of talented individuals with very multifaceted backgrounds and by doing this, it is elicited a lot of great suggestions, commentary, and food for thought. The Commission would welcome an action item in October. To the extent the Commission is able to do something from the Commission's perspective to support bridging the operational shortfall gap of the visitor center within our legal confines.

The Chairwoman thank Ms. Saumier for the coming and providing a very thorough presentation and answering the plethora of questions that the Commissioners tend to ask.

**I. *For Information Only:* Update on pending legal matters, including Federal Energy Regulatory Commission or Public Utilities Commission of Nevada filings.**

**Basic Water Company Bankruptcy.**

Special Counsel Briggs provided an update of the bankruptcy courts denial of their motion to approve their sale that has not been brought back to the court. The debtors filed an amended plan for confirmation and that is essentially the same as what they were trying to do with their motion to approve the sale. Basic Water Company is trying to sell substantially all of their assets to Precision Castparts for \$8 million.

The confirmation hearing is set for October 10, 2023, which will be the next Commission meeting day. There will probably be a revised assignment on that agenda. All of the Commission's contracts under the plan that Basic Water Company is seeking to get confirmed, are being assumed by Precision Castparts as they were before.

Chairwoman Premsrirut asked by and through that amended procedure or the confirmation of the plan, does the Commission still have consent rights or are those rights' part and parcel to approval of the plan and does the Commission has to accept the assumption.

Ms. Briggs stated it is part of the plan that the Commission has an obligation to approve whatever the assignment is, it can deny and then the Commission would see what would happen. Ideally, we negotiated this with the Debtors Counsel, they wanted reasonable approval.

Chairwoman Premsrirut asked does the Commission retain some discretion, albeit it's essentially pre-determined or at least the material parts are discussed prior to confirmation of the plan.

Ms. Briggs stated the plan has a list of the contracts that Precision Castparts are assuming and there is an asterisk next to the Commission's Contracts that requires the Commission's approval of the assignments.

Mr. Witkoski added Staff would expect that because the bankruptcy hearings scheduled to be held the morning of October 10, 2023, that an agenda item will be on the Commission meeting scheduled for that same afternoon.

**J. *For Information Only: Status update from Staff on the hydrological conditions, drought, and climate of the Colorado River Basin, Nevada's consumptive use of Colorado River water, the drought contingency plan, impacts on hydropower generation, electrical construction activities and other developments on the Colorado River.***

Assistant Director, Natural Resources Warren Turkett, Ph.D. and Senior Assistant Director, Sara Price provided an update on current negotiations presented A copy of the report is attached and made a part of the minutes (See Attachment B).

Commissioner Winterton asked if there was a difference between power pool and dead pool.

Dr. Turkett responded that power pool is the minimum elevation to generate hydropower, whereas dead pool is the elevation where water is no longer able to be released downstream.

#### Update on Current Negotiations

#### **Post-2026 Federal Register Notice and Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

Reclamation is currently processing the scoping comments submitted in August by a voluminous number of stakeholders, including Basin States, water users, NGOs, tribes and others for long term operating guidelines to replace the 2007 Interim Guidelines which expire in 2026. The comments have been published and are available on the Bureau of Reclamations' website. Negotiations in the Basins are just beginning to take place. It is evident from the variety of comments from the Upper and Lower Basins it will be a long haul requiring a lot of diligence but there is no doubt that the issues will be reconciled.

The environmental compliance pieces are running in tandem with that, the supplemental environmental impact statement is due to be released this fall, probably in early October regarding actions through 2026 to address and respond to near term risks of declining hydrology on the river.

Staff are very appreciative of the Reclamations presentation. Hearing what is expected in the move into the future are more creative paradigms for funding across the board. This is an opportunity to really reevaluate how the whole system is being applied and addressed, where things are broken and not working, we will try and work towards fixing them. As we can see from the presentation, this is one of those gaps that will be important to fill one way or the other. Staff will continue to keep the Commission apprised as the negotiations move forward.

**K. Comments from the public. Members of the public are invited to comment on items on the meeting agenda or on items not contained therein. No action may be taken on a matter raised during public comment until the matter itself has been specifically included on the agenda as an item for possible action.**

Chairwoman Premsrirut asked if there were any comments from the public. There were none.

**L. Comments and questions from the Commission members.**

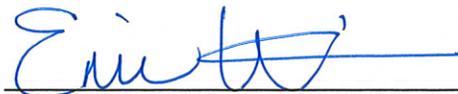
Chairwoman Premsrirut asked if there were any comments or questions from any Commission members. There were none.

**M. Selection of the next possible meeting date .**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on October 10, 2023, at the Clark County Government Center, Commission Chambers, 500 South Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89155.

**N. Adjournment .**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.



Eric Witkoski, Executive Director

APPROVED:

  
Puoy K. Premsrirut, Chairwoman



— BUREAU OF —  
RECLAMATION

## Hoover Dam Public Visitation Status, Challenges and Considerations

Terri Saumier, Facilities Services Manager LCDO

September 12, 2023

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### Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Status

- Visitation
  - Non-commercial entries
    - Pre-COVID 300K to 395K visitors/month
    - Post-COVID 200K to 240K visitors/month
  - Commercial entries - Commercial Use Authorization Program (CUA)
    - CUA implemented January 2020 permit requires – April 2020 start fee collection
    - Post-COVID began collecting CUA fee (\$5 / head) November 2021
    - Pre-COVID 35K to 85K visitors/month
    - Post-COVID 22K to 35K visitors/month

2

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## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Status

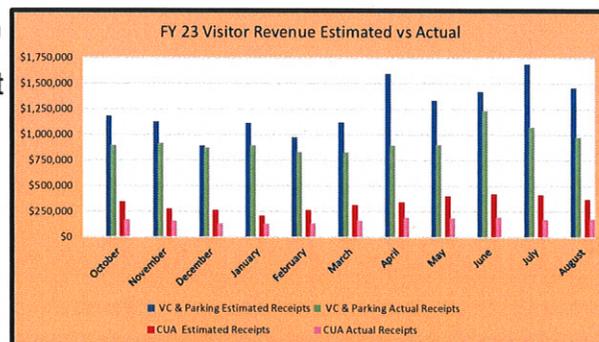
- Revenue
  - Paid Visitor Center Tours
    - Dam Tour \$30 – max daily capacity 390/day
    - Powerplant tour \$15 – max capacity 3,120/day\*
    - Exhibits Only \$10 – no limit other than building occupancy
    - 11-12% of visitors pay for a Visitor Center ticket
      - \*some variation in ticket prices for children
  - Parking
    - Parking Garage & AZ Spillway Lot \$10/vehicle
    - 25% of vehicles pay for parking
  - CUA
    - Permit fee \$300/yr – 136 active permits
    - \$5/head upon entering

3

3

## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Status

- Revenue
  - Pre-COVID Estimated Visitor Services receipts \$19M/yr
    - \$15M Visitor Center ticket sales & Parking
    - \$4M Commercial Use Authorization
    - Revising estimate to \$17M in 2025 budget
      - \$15M ticket sales
      - \$2M Commercial Use Authorization
  - COVID-19 has had significant impact
    - \$8.48M shortfall in FY 2020
    - \$9.42M shortfall in FY 2021
    - \$9.14M shortfall in FY 2022
    - \$5 to \$6M PROJECTED FY 2023



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## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Challenges

- Visitor Services Expenses

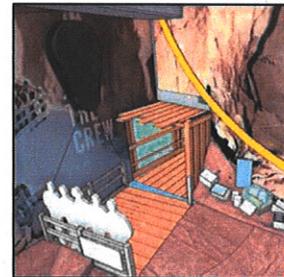
- Things we do exclusively to host visiting public or things we do more of to host visiting public
  - Visitor Center & OEB – Tour staff, Routine repairs & maintenance by Reclamation forces, SRF, Contracted security, Cleaning contract, Ticketing contract, Pest control contract
  - Railroad Tunnel trail, Parking garage, Parking lots, Memorial Bridge Plaza, Monument Plaza, roads, walkways, trash disposal, restaurant & gift store support
  - Security – Checkpoint, SRF Guards & Command Center, NPS Interagency Agreement, Contracted security
  - Water & wastewater treatment, restrooms
  - Major Repairs & Replacements, Extra Ordinary Maintenance, Capital Improvements
- Operations and Maintenance approximately \$18M
- Major Repairs and Replacements, Capital Improvements approximately \$7M

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## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Challenges

- Other funding sources received
  - Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) 2001-present
    - 19 projects completed ~ \$19M
    - 4 projects underway ~ \$38M
  - Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) 2018-present
    - 6 projects completed - \$5,390,882
  - Reclamation Denver Security - Post-9/11 security enhancements
    - Guards/Law Enforcement \$10,287,907
    - Projects - \$ 24,278,315
- Other Possible Funding Sources
  - Entry Fee?
  - Post Retirement Benefits – working
  - Merchandise Sales – very small to no return on investment



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## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Challenges

- Funding Legislation

- 43 U.S.C. § 618 Promulgation of charges for electrical energy

- The Secretary of the Interior is authorized and directed to, and he shall, promulgate charges, on the basis of computation thereof, for electrical energy generated at Hoover Dam beginning June 1, 1937, computed to be sufficient, together with other net revenues from the project, to accomplish the following purposes:

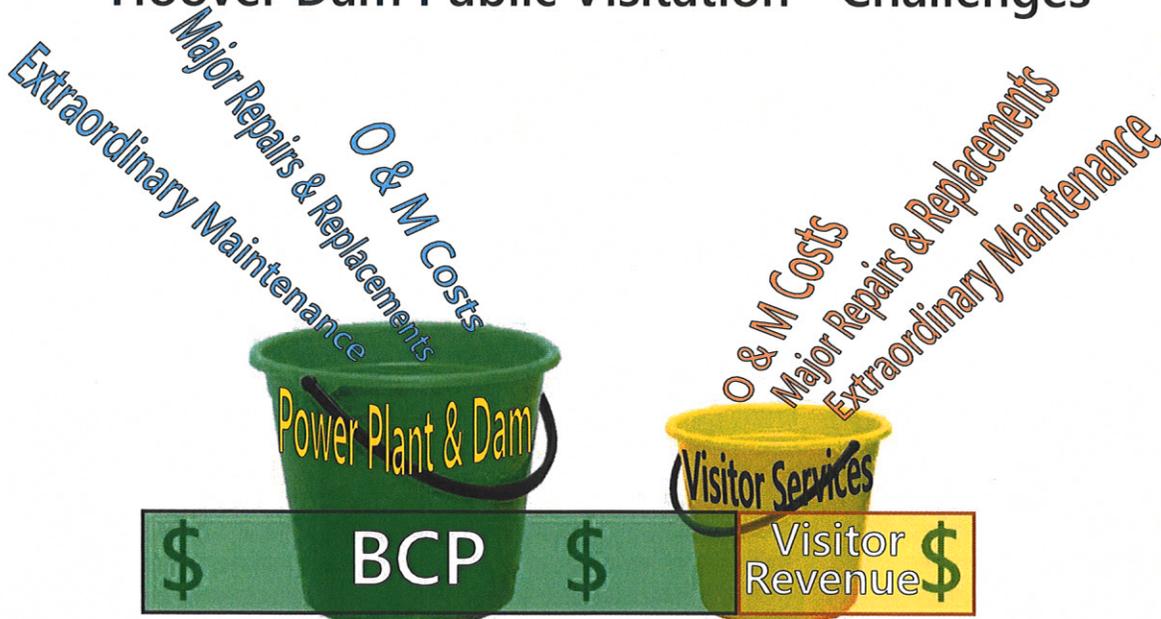
- (a) To meet the cost of operation and maintenance, and to provide for replacements, of the project beginning June 1, 1937;

- (b) To repay to the Treasury, with interest, the advances to the Colorado River Dam Fund for the project made prior to June 1, 1937.....

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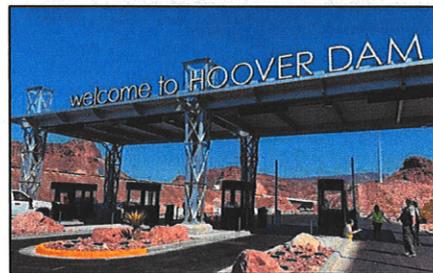
## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Challenges



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## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Considerations

- Hoover Visitor Services Program
  - Objectives
    - Collect enough in Visitor Services revenue to cover the costs of Visitor Services
    - All public enjoying the amenities provided at Hoover share in paying for the amenities
  - Current Status
    - Estimated annual requirement - \$25M
      - \$18M for O&M
      - \$7M for Capital Improvements
    - Current Revenue - ~\$12M
      - Current revenue impacted by COVID
      - Estimate revenue to recover to \$17M

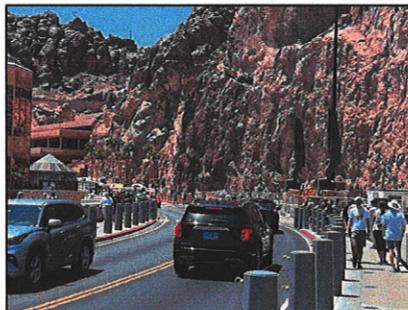


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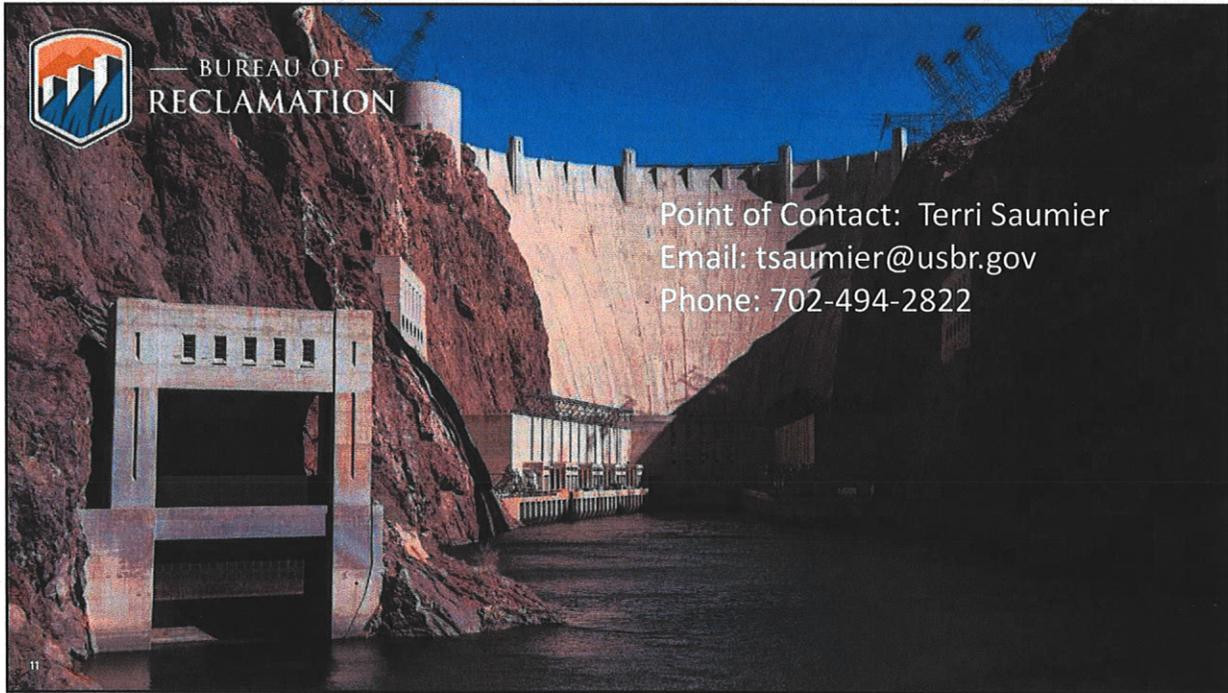
## Hoover Dam Public Visitation - Considerations

- Hoover Visitor Services Program
  - Why doesn't Hoover charge an entry fee?
    - Hoover is currently able to charge for tours and parking under Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) as "Standard Amenity Recreation Fees"
    - FLREA prohibits Reclamation from charging entrance fee
  - Authority to charge an entry fee would require legislative action – restrictions on federal agencies or employees on lobbying for legislative action



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# Colorado River Commission of Nevada

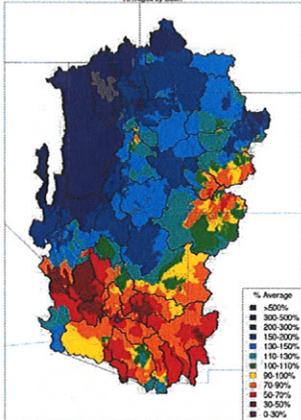
## Hydrology and River Updates

Warren Turkett  
September 12, 2023

1

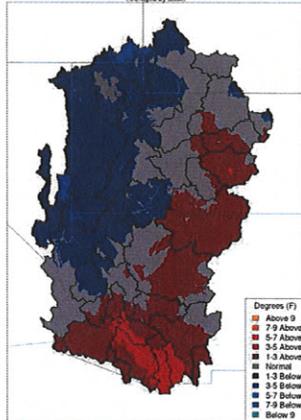
### Precipitation and Temperature

**Monthly Precipitation - August 2023**  
Averaged by Basin



Prepared by NOAA, Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
848 Lake City, Utah, www.cbrfc.noaa.gov

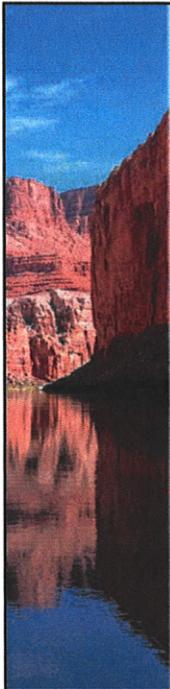
**Max Temp - Monthly Deviation - August 2023**  
Averaged by Basin



Prepared by NOAA, Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
848 Lake City, Utah, www.cbrfc.noaa.gov

Area	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Water Year
UC-Powell	84	82	152	170	102	183	67	67	136	47	123	112

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## August 24 Month Study Determination

Reclamation released the results of the August 24 Month Study, which is used to determine the upcoming years operations for both reservoirs.

- Lake Powell will be operated in the Mid-Elevation Release Tier with a release of 7.48 million acre-feet in water year 2024;
- Lake Mead will operate in a Level 1 Shortage Condition for the lower basin.
  - Nevada will have a 13,000 acre-feet reduction from the 2007 Interim Guidelines; and
  - An 8,000 acre-feet Drought Contingency Plan contribution in calendar year 2024.

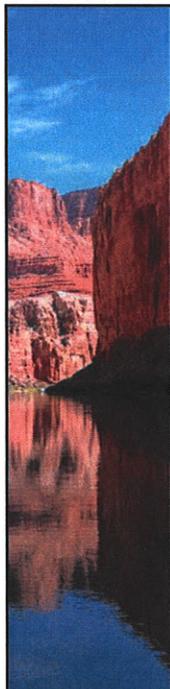
The above average runoff this year contributed to an improvement in operations over the current Level 2 Shortage Conditions experienced last year.

Reclamation press release:

<https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/news-release/4603>

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2007 Interim Guidelines, Minute 323, Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan, and Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan  
Total Volumes (kaf)

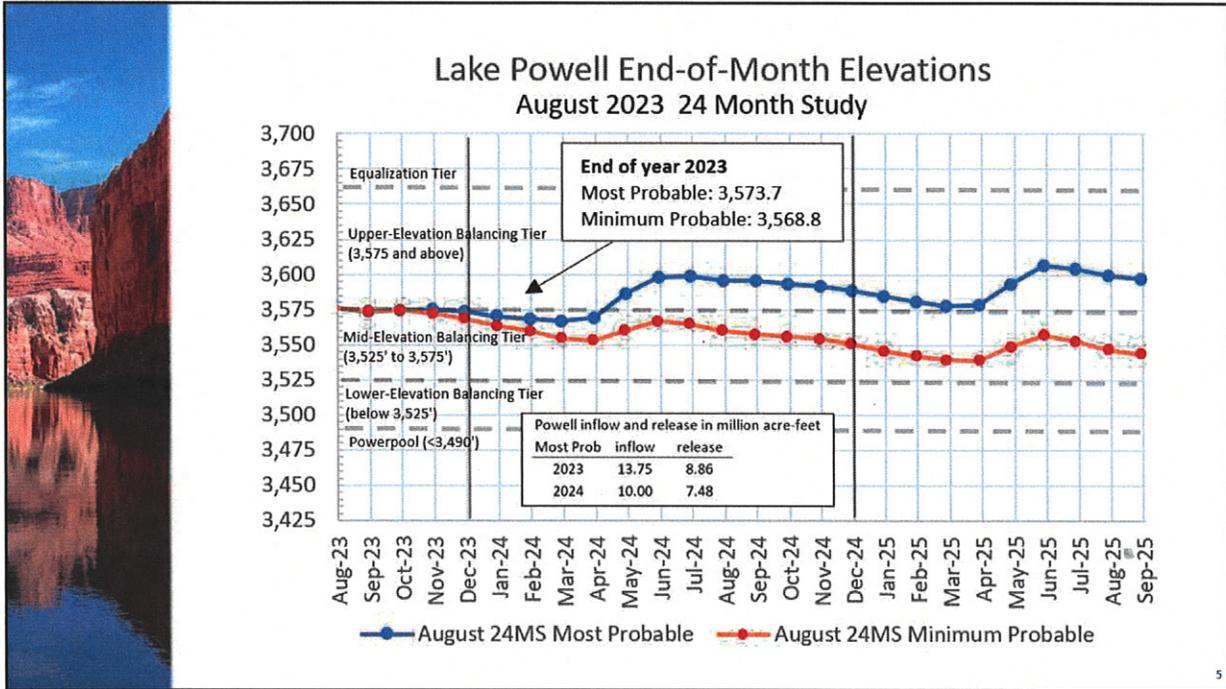
Lake Mead Elevation (feet msl)	2007 Interim Guidelines Shortages			Minute 323 Delivery Reductions	Total Combined Reductions	DCP Water Savings Contributions			Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan Savings	Combined Volumes by Country US (2007 Interim Guidelines Shortages + DCP Contributions) Mexico (Minute 323 Delivery Reductions + Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan Savings)					Total Combined Volumes
	AZ	NV	Mexico			AZ	NV	CA		Mexico	AZ Total	NV Total	CA Total	Lower Basin States Total	
1,090 - 1,075	0	0	0	0	192	8	0	41	192	8	0	200	41	241	
1,075 - 1050	320	13	50	383	192	8	0	30	512	21	0	533	80	613	
1,050 - 1,045	400	17	70	487	192	8	0	34	592	25	0	617	104	721	
1,045 - 1,040	400	17	70	487	240	10	200	76	640	27	200	867	146	1,013	
1,040 - 1,035	400	17	70	487	240	10	250	84	640	27	250	917	154	1,071	
1,035 - 1,030	400	17	70	487	240	10	300	92	640	27	300	967	162	1,129	
1,030 - 1,025	400	17	70	487	240	10	350	101	640	27	350	1,017	171	1,188	
<1,025	480	20	125	625	240	10	350	150	720	30	350	1,100	275	1,375	

Tier 1 →

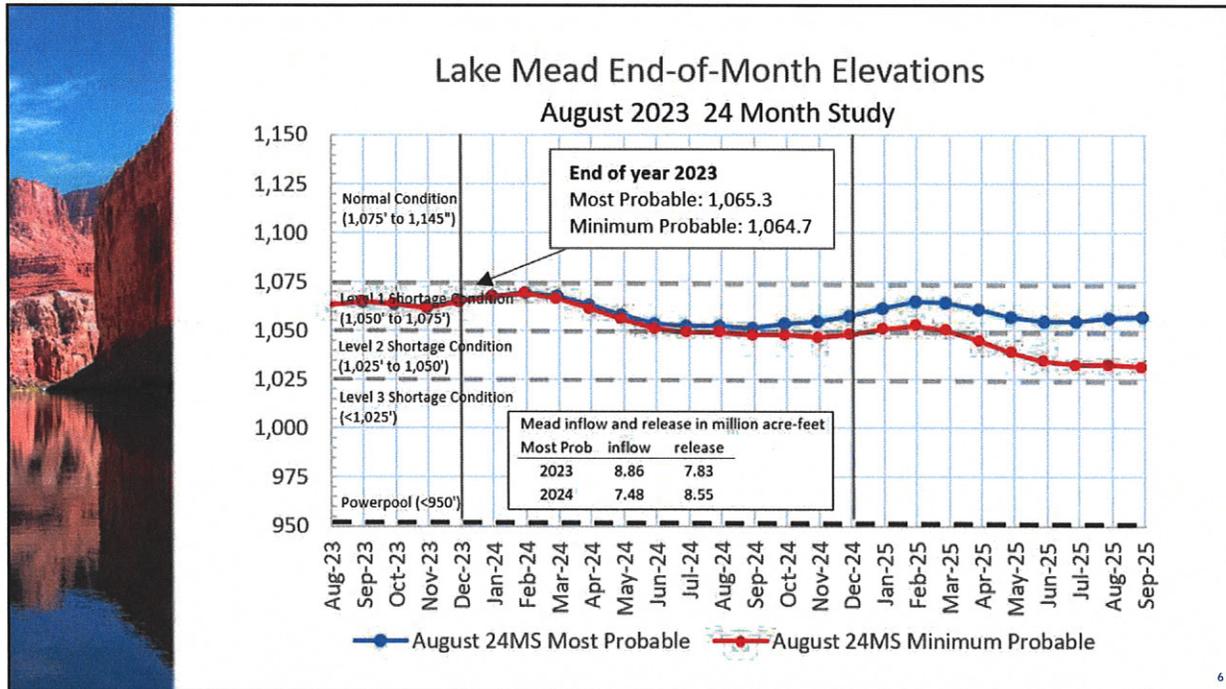
On August 15, Reclamation released the August 24 Month Study which determined the upcoming years operations. Lake Mead in calendar year 2024 will be operated in a Level 1 Shortage Condition.

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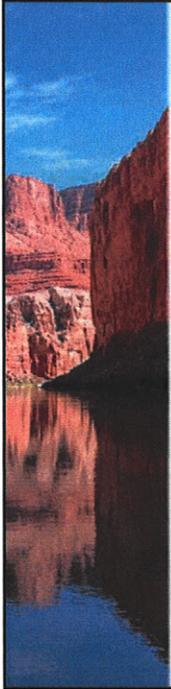
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## Water Use In Southern Nevada

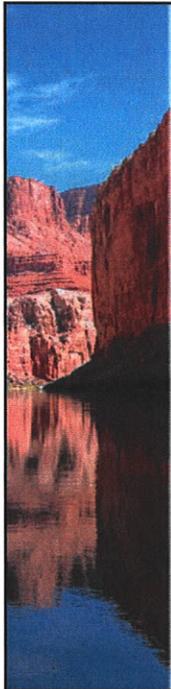
**2023 January - July Southern Nevada Water Use<sup>1</sup>**      **Acre-Feet**

Nevada Annual Allocation	300,000
Drought Contingency Plan contribution	-8,000
Interim Guidelines Shortages	-17,000
Diversions	254,938
Return Flow Credits	139,412
Consumptive Use	115,526 (-19% compared to last year)

<sup>1</sup> 2023 Consumptive use data is preliminary.

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## Negotiations and Updates

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**  
 Reclamation is still on track to release a new draft SEIS this fall regarding actions through 2026 to address and respond to near term risks of declining hydrology on the river.

**Post-2026 Federal Register Notice**  
 Reclamation is currently processing the scoping comments submitted in August by a voluminous number of stakeholders, including Basin States, water users, NGOs, tribes and others for long term operating guidelines to replace the 2007 Interim Guidelines which expire in 2026. Negotiations in the Basins are just beginning to take place.

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