

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 15, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

We are writing you in regard to the recent high-flow experiment conducted March 5<sup>th</sup> through March 8<sup>th</sup> at the Glen Canyon Dam in Coconino County, Arizona. We are interested in the conclusions of the experiment and any resulting agency action and would appreciate a timely response to our inquiries.

The experiment conducted in early March at Glen Canyon Dam is the third such experiment conducted since 1996 and supplements over 25 years of studies conducted concerning the same dam. The Bureau of Reclamation began studying the effects of dam operations for power purposes in 1982, formalized a process in the mid-1980s and, following the passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act in 1992, has completed several relevant environmental impact statements, the first of which was issued in 1996. Both before 1996 and since, numerous scientific studies have been conducted, the latest of which began on March 5<sup>th</sup> of this year.

More specifically, as we understand it, the two previous iterations of this high-flow experiment conducted at Glen Canyon Dam incorporated information during low-sediment and medium-sediment time periods in the Colorado River. The third experiment was conducted purposefully during a high-sediment time period to offer a complete picture of the effects of high-flows through Glen Canyon Dam on the surrounding environment and river species. In the context of the 25 years of scientific study and the three relevant experiments, we are hopeful that the science surrounding this issue has been resolved and we ask that you provide us with the conclusive result of the final experiment as well as the Administration's intention regarding further scientific study. We also respectfully ask that you provide all of the data and analyses resulting from the experiment before further action is taken at Glen Canyon Dam. We believe any further action is unnecessary and unjustified before conclusions are reached within the parameters of the March experimentation.

Lastly, we also understand that the high-flows of this experiment adversely impacted the power providers and, therefore, the power customers dependent on Glen Canyon Dam who have already lost the capacity equivalent of a two-unit coal-fired power plant. While it is important that we remain sensitive to our effects on the

environment, it is also important to balance any environmental benefits with the costs to the power consumers in the West, particularly during a time of record-high energy prices. We respectfully ask that you provide information on the evaluation made during this process with respect to the power generated from the dam and what future plans you have in alleviating the high energy costs to the consumer. Specifically, we request that you inform us how you intend to evaluate the full hydropower capability of the dam's generators in this new study.

We appreciate your consideration of this important matter. As this country moves towards an emissions-free energy market while facing unprecedented energy demand, clean hydropower drawn from such resources as Glen Canyon Dam will become increasingly important. Continuous scientific studies on the effects of the dam must reach conclusions so that the resulting uncertainty to the power providers and, therefore, the power customers of the West may be resolved.

Sincerely,

John Madeggs

Cathy McHenry Rodger

Don Young

Jim Flake

Kent Starks

Steven Pena

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