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**Nevada State Senator Calls for Audit of Bureau Of Reclamation's
Colorado River Management Strategies:
Encourages State Legislators across the Basin to take part**

Nevada State Senator Tick Segerblom has announced plans to introduce legislation for an independent scientific and economic probe into the Bureau of Reclamation's current and future management plans for the Colorado River.

Citing deficiencies in Reclamation's response to mounting water scarcity, public safety, and ecological concerns on the Colorado River, the senator fears absent immediate independent intervention, Reclamation's guidance may propel the Southwest into a dangerous cycle of crisis management.

- Reclamation's water supply planning assumes climate change may only reduce river flows by nine percent on average by 2060, despite climate scientists warning that it could be more than four times that, and that for nearly 15 years average flows of the Colorado River have been dropped 15 percent.
- Reclamation is not addressing the critical interplay between surface water shortages and ground water loss, despite the increasingly rapid depletion of ground water supplies across the Colorado River Basin—recently estimated to be declining at a rate equivalent to 1/3 the Colorado River's annual flow.
- Findings published last month, and known to Reclamation for several years, presents worrying evidence of Colorado River flood flows of rates and frequencies much greater than what Reclamation has been using in its designs and operations.
- Despite decades of public investment in habitat restoration work, no significant progress is being made toward endangered species recovery, there's no plan for dedicated flows to the Colorado River Delta, and Reclamation's much heralded Colorado River Basin Study released in December 2012 made no provisions for the environment.

Such independent scientific review is far from unique, and currently a key aspect to address challenges facing the San Joaquin/Sacramento River system in California, where Reclamation too is a major actor.

“What is unique is a public official stepping outside the box longtime defined by Reclamation’s biases and constraints in order to seek urgently needed independent perspectives on the management of this critical part of the nation’s infrastructure,” says John Weisheit, Living Rivers Conservation Director.

“Thirty five million people and an economy valued at \$1.7 trillion annually, the 12th largest in the world, deserves the truth, not optimistic projections and the potential justification for new infrastructure that renders the system more vulnerable as it wallows from crisis to crisis informed by Reclamation’s short-sightedness,” adds Weisheit.

State Senator Segerblom intends this initiative to also catalyze long overdue cooperation within the legislative bodies of all seven Colorado River Basin states, working toward establishing the type of publicly-accountable, watershed-based governance structure that a river system of this magnitude and importance requires.

“It’s ironic that such leadership is coming from the State of Nevada which consumes just 2% of the Colorado River’s flows,” adds Weisheit. “But then again, the senator was born in the town that built Hoover Dam and led Reclamation’s foray into the Colorado River Basin. Possibly the spirit which launched Colorado River development in the early 20th century is reemerging to push for the river’s sustainable management in the 21st.”

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Additional Information (hyperlinked)

- [Nevada State Senator Segerblom’s Press Release \(July 8, 2014\)](#)
- [Executive Summary: Reclamation's Colorado River Basin Supply and Demand Study \(December 2012\)](#)
- [Living Rivers Comments on Reclamation's Basin Study \(March 2013\)](#)
- [Upper Colorado River Hydrology \(June 2014\)](#)
- [Colorado River researchers find signs of ancient, devastating floods \(LA Times: June 19, 2014\)](#)
- [NASA’s GRACE Satellites Show Colorado River Basin’s Biggest Water Losses Are Groundwater \(2005-2013\) \(Circle of Blue: December 13, 2013\)](#)