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State of Nevada Senate

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Proposed legislation calls for an independent scientific and economic audit of the Bureau of Reclamation's strategies for Colorado River management

Las Vegas, NV - As Lake Mead water levels drop to new lows, uncertainty around the security of the Colorado River water supplies mounts. Just 18 months ago, the Bureau of Reclamation announced findings from its three-year water supply study, that while climate change may affect inputs into the Colorado, such reductions would be minimal, and decades down the road.

"For years scientists have been warning of shortage scenarios similar to what we are now facing, but none of these are being addressed and reported by the Bureau of Reclamation," said Senator Tick Segerblom. "That's why I'm proposing legislation to support an independent scientific and economic audit of Reclamation's current and planned water management strategies."

Beyond the long-overdue need for such independent analysis to be made available to the public, this initiative aims to encourage legislators in the six other Colorado River basin states to pursue similar legislation. Such collective action would represent an important step in addressing the longstanding need for the type of publicly accountable, basin-wide governance structure routinely formed for river basins crossing political, state and international boundaries, but not yet pursued on the Colorado.

"Healthy rivers signal healthy societies, yet Reclamation failed to mention ecological issues in its recent analysis," added Senator Segerblom. "The Colorado River is a river of national parks, but the river running through them are struggling. Just look at Grand Canyon and failed efforts to mitigate the impacts on its famed river corridor due to Glen Canyon Dam operations. We need real science to tell us how these restoration programs can serve the public interest, and even enable the Colorado to once again flow to the sea."

"Reclamation may have played the major role in erecting our Colorado River infrastructure, but it's clearly time for people across the basin to begin leading its future management," said Senator Segerblom. "To do so however, requires an honest assessment of the real issues before us; that's what my legislative proposal aims to achieve."

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