LIVING RIVERS
COLORADO RIVERKEEPER®

September 10, 2008

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E., Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Re: FERC Project Nos. 13227 and 13146. Comments on the application for a preliminary permit known as Bull Canyon Pumped Storage Water Power Project and Long Canyon Pumped Storage Water Power Project by Utah Independent Power, the applicants. Pursuant to Federal Register Notice of July 16, 2008, Vol. 73, No. 137.

Dear Ms. Bose,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public comments concerning the proposed Bull Canyon & Long Canyon Pumped Storage Water Power Project by Utah Independent Power (UIP), which would provide peaking power by using pumped Colorado River water stored in perched, off-river reservoirs in Grand County, Utah, near Canyonlands National Park and Dead Horse Point State Park. We understand the power to pump the water from the river to the two reservoirs will be provided by steam generating plants that heat water using fossil fuels.

This letter is offered to Federal Energy Regulatory Agency (FERC) by the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Moab, Utah, which is located about 6 miles from the proposed pumping plant: Center for Water Advocacy, Colorado Plateau River Guides, Colorado Riverkeeper, Living Rivers, Moab Local Green Party, Red Rock Forests, and Uranium Watch.

The permit under request, to determine the feasibility of this hydropower project, should be denied because the proposed power plant is far removed from urban power markets and is not truly renewable nor energy efficient. This project will also stress ever-diminishing water supplies for people and critical habitat, and spoil superlative scenery critical to the areas economy.

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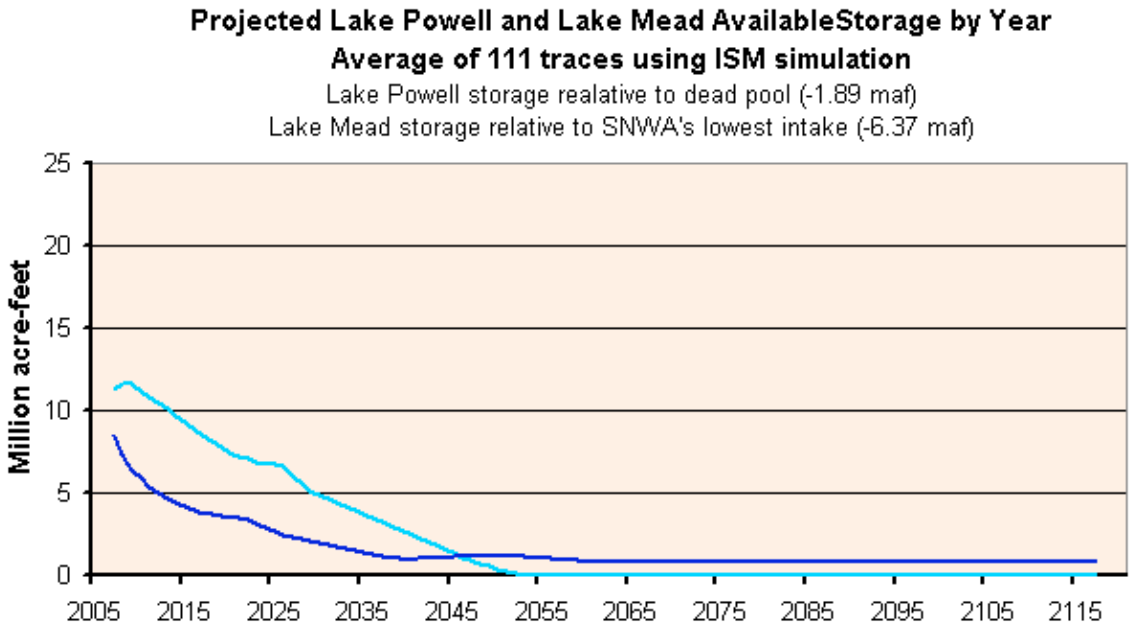
To be efficient as possible, new power plants should be adjacent to the markets they are intended for. New projects should be renewable in that they are not dependent on fossil or nuclear fuels, nor damage sensitive lands near critical habitat and protected federal and state lands.

Furthermore, it is not necessary for project investors to spend large amounts of money on a feasibility study that will needlessly damage the landscape, when free and credible hydrologic and geologic studies about the Colorado Plateau and Colorado River already exist. A simple document search will provide a significant amount of prior research that will show why this proposed project is not feasible, nor prudent.

Water Scarcity

Both federal and university scientists have determined that the Colorado River no longer has surplus water, since the system is over-appropriated and increasing evaporation from atmospheric warming will keep this situation unchanged beyond the duration of a federal 50-year operating permit. This water scarcity problem for the Colorado River basin includes predictions that hydropower production at Glen Canyon and Hoover dams will cease in the near future.

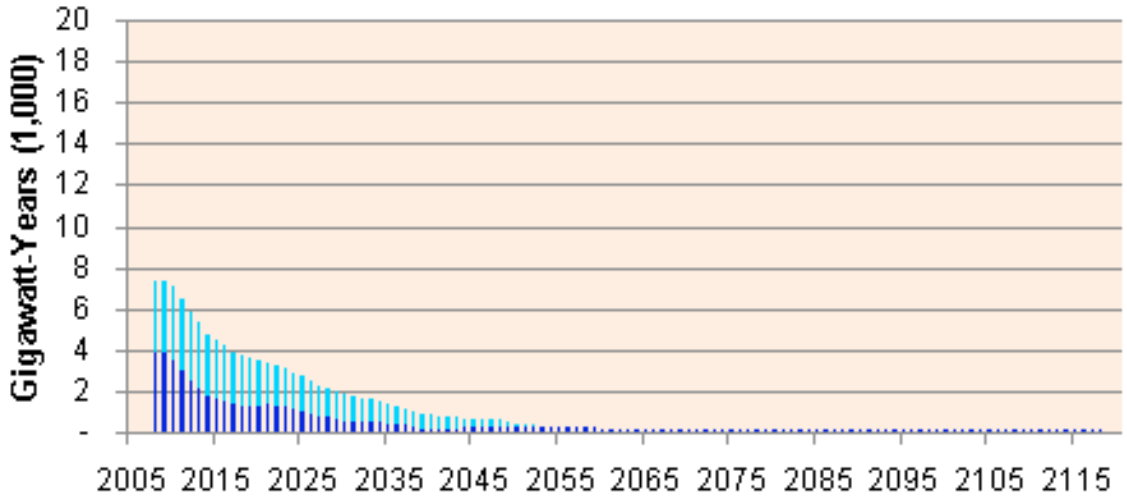
For example, last February the Scripps Institute produced a peer-reviewed paper that concluded Lakes Mead and Powell will empty despite the guidance of Shortage Criteria from the Bureau of Reclamation (2007 FEIS), and provided a timetable: 10% chance by 2013, 50% chance by 2021, and 100% by 2036. The report is based on an annual reduction of Colorado River flows at 10% for the present and 30% by 2060, which is displayed as a graphic below by using Index Sequential Modeling (ISM) according to the open source simulator CROSS found at www.onthecolorado.org/Cross.cfm .



Legend

Light blue is Lake Powell (Glen Canyon Dam)
Dark Blue is Lake Mead (Hoover Dam)

The ISM results for projected average hydropower production at Glen Canyon and Hoover dams, is displayed below.



It is not internally consistent to grant a federal license to a hydroelectric facility that needs Colorado River water to operate, when existing Colorado River hydropower facilities are currently stressed from low reservoir levels and predicted to fail entirely within the next 50 years.

Transmission Lines

The Bureau of Reclamation conducted feasibility studies in the past for hydroelectric dams on the Colorado River in Grand County. One of the reasons why hydropower dams were not built in Grand County included the long distances for transmission lines to deliver that power to faraway urban markets, which remains true today. Power projects must be built closer to the markets they are intended for to minimize losses through long transmission lines.

Furthermore, the additional transmission lines for this project in the scenic Colorado Plateau will harm the fundamental reason why visitors from around the world visit our county to enjoy our unspoiled canyons and vistas.

Seepage and Evaporation

This proposal includes two new reservoirs that are surrounded by a geologic formation known as the Glen Canyon Group. These Jurassic sandstones are comprised of massive and homogenous formations that are highly porous and permeable. For example, the Glen Canyon Group surrounds Lake Powell downstream. The Bureau of Reclamation estimates that as much as 19 million acre-feet of Colorado River water have saturated these sandstones.

The climate of the area is arid with excessive evaporation rates. The local annual evaporation rate exceeds the amount of annual rainfall on the magnitude of six.

Consequently, thousands of acre-feet of water will unnecessarily be lost to support these two reservoirs and constitutes another inappropriate inefficiency for this project, especially when considering the impending scarcity of water for downstream consumers and the critical habitats of this region with endangered and threatened species.

Dam Safety

The geology of the proposed dam site in Day Canyon has Triassic Chinle Shale. The Bureau of Reclamation has done feasibility studies about Chinle Shale with the conclusion that it is not an adequate bedrock material for dam construction. For example, of the many potential sites investigated for the building of Glen Canyon Dam in Arizona, the sites where Chinle Shale is exposed were rejected.

Day Canyon

The pumping plant and lower reservoir for this proposal will be located at the mouth of Day Canyon, which is a popular hiking place for residents and tourists alike. The staff, volunteers and members of this coalition letter hike Day Canyon frequently because it has springs, riparian vegetation, outstanding vistas, and native wildlife to observe, such as desert bighorn sheep and breeding birds.

In the Resource Management Plan (RMP), currently under environmental review, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing that grazing be excluded from Day Canyon for the reasons of springs and the riparian vegetation it supports in this refuge canyon. The impacts of a reservoir inundating Day Canyon are indeed more severe than those of grazing stock animals. It would be inconsistent for BLM to consider exceptions for a reservoir that would destroy what the agency considers to be important wildlife habitat.

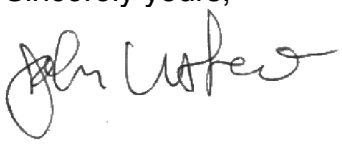
Furthermore, the proposed BLM RMP has designated Day Canyon as part of the Goldbar/Corona Arch Hiking Focus Area. The purposes of this BLM designation would be compromised by this reservoir as well.

Conclusion

It is unfortunate that UIP is wasting the time, resources, and goodwill of federal and state agencies, and the citizens of Grand County, to process this ill-conceived plan to build an expensive and inefficient power plant with many inappropriate tradeoffs. We ask that you deny this permit so that the investment money can be used instead for power development that is truly innovative, efficient and renewable, and without causing any harm to natural resources that are already under stress or sensitive to development.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely yours,



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