



MEMORANDUM

TO: IEDA Board
RE: Water Committee Report
DATE: May 15th, 2025

Commissioner(s)

Todd McIntyre, the rumored Commissioner will actually be heading up the Inter-Boundary Water Commission. According to the NWRA speaker, the BOR Commissioner will be announced in the next couple of weeks. It is possible that Jason Phillips is back in contention.

DOI Doesn't Dodge DOGE

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum last week raised the stakes of the Trump administration's overhaul of that agency, signing an order handing sweeping control of his department's budget and workforce to an official affiliated with the so-called Department of Government Efficiency. The order to consolidate Interior's sprawling administrative functions across the country gives unprecedented power to Tyler Hassen, 42, a former oil field services company executive who was also a member of Elon Musk's DOGE team. Hassen, who was recently named Interior's named acting assistant secretary for policy, management and budget, started at the department as part of the DOGE strike force tasked with cutting the agency's costs, contracts and employees.

Interior began circulating basic outlines for the reorganization last week, which a department official familiar with the plan said at the time would include consolidating communications, financial management, contracting, human resources, grants, civil rights and interactive technology.

When Will We Be Out of the DOGE House

Despite Elon Musk's plans to step away, DOGE (or at least the majority of the activities) will likely be ongoing until mid-July. While that is just a few months off, it seems like an eternity, especially with no Commissioner, the Lower Basin Regional Director being retired, and rumor that the Upper Basin Regional Director is set to leave soon.

With so much disruption and vacancies, it is no wonder that no one really knows what is going on with the Post-2026 situation. Word on the hill is that if the states don't have a settlement by the end of the year, then the administration is going to step in. It is expected that a DOI Deputy Secretary (Scott Cameron) will take on the Colorado River issue, at least until a Commissioner can be confirmed.

Don't Mess w/ Texas

President Donald Trump threatened "escalating consequences" including tariffs and sanctions on Mexico if it doesn't deliver water to the U.S. as required by a 1944 water treaty between the two countries.

Texas lawmakers and farmers have been sounding alarms about Mexico's delays in delivering water to the U.S. along the Rio Grande for years. The missing water has led to the closure of the last sugar mill in Texas and has threatened the state's citrus industry as well as other top regional commodities like cotton and vegetables. Under the 81-year-old treaty, Mexico is obligated to deliver 1.75 million acre-feet of water to the U.S. every five years. The current five-year window closes in October, but Mexico has delivered less than 30 percent of the requirement. Mexico argues that climate change-driven drought has hindered its ability to send the requisite water. Congress passed \$280 million for aid to Texas farmers in its stopgap funding bill in December.

The Trump administration issued a shot across the bow last month when the State Department denied Mexico's request to deliver a small portion of Colorado River water to the city of Tijuana through U.S. water systems, although that move was mostly symbolic. Mexican officials have been scrambling to come up with

ways of increasing water deliveries to the U.S. to head off an escalating fight that could bleed into trade negotiations, as Trump threatened Thursday.

NWRA Meeting

Regarding your Water Committee Report, Scott Cameron is the Deputy Secretary now handling Colorado River issues. What he has said so far:

- He holds the doctrine of prior appropriation in as high regard as the Bible and the Constitution.
- Confirmed the same timeline.
 - Additional Alternatives or consensus in by May, early June.
 - Meet from there to the end of the year to get it done.
 - Draft EIS in the Fall.
- Wants larger variety of options from Basin States so there is coverage under NEPA. Stated there may be a few "out there" ideas to make sure there is coverage.
- Assistant Secretary and BOR team will be at all future meetings of the Basin States.
- Will negotiate with the states first. Then Mexico.
- He feels that Congress will be needed. Unavoidable.
- Has met with GRIC and CRIT. ADWR.
- Has briefed the House state delegations. Was meeting with Senate end of last week.
- Wants adaptive management, 20-year term.
- *Both basins need to contribute to the U.S.'s obligation to Mexico under the Treaty.*
- Interior Secures 18 Short-Term Agreements to Boost Colorado River Conservation
- Arizona and California agreements will conserve 321,000 acre-feet of water through 2026 to help sustain Lake Mead