

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources
Law & Policy
April 15, 2022

Potentially More Water Supply Cut from the Series of Dams and Reservoirs Known as The Colorado River

The Department of the Interior operates Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam which create Lake Powell and Lake Mead, respectively. Those dams and lakes provide energy and water to several states, cities, and tribes. However, the ongoing, pervasive drought in the Southwestern U.S. (or just the new normal under climate change) is making it almost-if-not-already-completely impossible for Interior to meet those demands. The drought means less water enters the lakes while the demand for water to come out of those lakes goes up. That's brought those lakes' levels down to the point where the dams are in danger of being unable to operate as sources of electricity powering the entire region. Where to go from such a hard spot? That's what Interior is trying to figure out and they have sent [letters](#) to the Colorado River Basin States, signatories to the now laughably inadequately framed Colorado River Compact, asking for their commitment to [help identify and develop responsive strategies](#) for this issue. Unless an inconceivable amount of miracles occur in the next week or two, that responsive strategy is almost certainly going to mean 500,000 fewer acre-feet of water coming out of the system and going to Arizona, Nevada, and California. Those states, in turn, will have to figure out how to go without that water or find other sources for it, both easier said than done.

Is Water Security a [Clear and Present Danger](#)?

Rumor has it that the White House and the National Security Council are [working on an action plan to address global water security](#). It certainly wouldn't be the first time an institution has championed global water security, and it wouldn't be the first time the White House and national security types have addressed water, but it feels like a new step that could make many hopeful or just culminate in [The Sum of All Fears](#).

Last year, in not-so-[Red October](#), the White House announced they were "[prioritizing climate in foreign policy and national security](#)." That included the intelligence community (what an amazing [euphemism](#)) announcing that climate change would exacerbate national security risks. Again, nothing that plenty in the academic or advocacy worlds haven't been saying for a while, but it mattered that it was an [official statement](#) from people who may or may not be in charge of all of this country's [spies](#) and paired with [another statement](#) from the Department of Defense who is in charge of all of this country's bombs (and some other stuff, one presumes). Then, in January the White House [announced an initiative](#) to help those in charge of all this country's water infrastructure to improve their cybersecurity. Good

The **Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy** is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and legal stewardship of water.

Coming Up:

[Coastal Law in Louisiana \(CLE\)](#), April 21-22

Water jobs:

[Attorney III](#), California State Water Resources Control Board; Sacramento, CA

[Water Justice Specialist](#), Bayou City Waterkeeper, Houston, TX

[Sustainability/ESG Director](#), PwC; multiple locations

[Research Associate](#), University of New Orleans; New Orleans, LA

[Research Associate 1](#), University of Louisiana Lafayette; Lafayette, LA

[Sportsmen Outreach coordinator](#); National Wildlife Federation; New Orleans, LA

[Environmental Justice Coordinator](#); VAYLA; New Orleans, LA

6325 Freret Street, 1st Floor
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-865-5982

tulanewater.org

TWITTER: [@TulaneWaterLaw](#)

thing, too, since water utilities seem to be under constant cyber-bombardment (What ever happened to just bending spoons and dodging bullets?).

But this rumored new action plan (will it contain executive orders) would link global water security with America's National Security. If it comes out, it's expected to prioritize ensuring American water security while preventing conflicts over water, improving access to sanitation, and promoting cross-border cooperation. But there's a very good chance the NSC views these things from a different angle from their op center and with different priorities than those calling for the same thing at the Global Institute for Water Security. If this goes ahead, and water security becomes a foreign policy priority for the U.S., will those working for global water security be able to do so without remorse and create a net force change in the water world? Or will there just be a new course at the School of the Americas teaching "water security" while they play patriot games?

It's Playlist Time Again

It's been a pandemic since we did our last playlist of water songs. So, it's about time we all combined our collective music fandom to share and connect and remind ourselves that we're not the only ones who think about these things with potentially unhealthy frequency. With IPCC reports coming hot and heavy these days, not to mention every other damn thing in the news, climate change is at the front of our minds almost all the time. It is so for many artists, too. Therefore, we here at TUWaterWays headquarters propose a climate change playlist. Please, please, please send in any music you know that deals with climate change. Could be a neo-classical concept album from an electronic artist. Could be a club dirge from a pop queen. We want them all. Special TUWaterWays shout out will go to the person who sends in the oldest piece of music addressing climate change!

Coastal Law! Hot Fresh Coastal Law Right Here!

Interested in Louisiana coastal issues and the laws and policies that surround them? Looking for some CLE credit this spring? Need something to fill your social calendar the week before Jazz Fest? Well, we've got just the conference for you—featuring our very own fearless leader, Mark Davis, discussing nutrient management, Mississippi River resources, as well as surface and groundwater rights. The Seminar Group will be putting on the "Coastal Law in Louisiana" conference April 21-22 in New Orleans, with expert panels on topics including flood management and levee issues, oysters and aquaculture, offshore wind energy, environmental justice and coastal planning, and more. So check out the current agenda here and register if you're interested. We hope to see you there!