

# Joint Reservoir Committee and Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 3.2: Final EIR/EIS Status Update

July 21, 2023



# Final EIR/EIS Briefings in Preparation for Approval of Project

- February 2023, Part 1
  - Review Final EIR/EIS requirements and format
  - Provide overview of changes to the project based on design refinements and operations
  - Discuss revisions to modeling
- March 2023, Part 2
  - Overview of key comments and master responses; ongoing public and local community, tribal and NGO outreach
- April 2023, Part 3
  - Overview of refinements to impacts and mitigation measures; Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- May 2023, Part 3, Continued
  - Statement of Overriding Considerations
- June 2023, Part 3, Continued
  - Overview of Findings; Water Quality and Tribal Cultural Resources
- July and August 2023
  - Any last items
- September or October 2023, Board Hearing
  - EIR Certification
  - Decision to Approve Project
  - Next steps post EIR

# CEQA/NEPA Joint Document

- CEQA and NEPA are similar in intent and process but have key differences that require careful coordination
- Since 2017, the Authority has worked closely with Reclamation to prepare the EIR/EIS
- Focus of our briefings to date has been on the CEQA components of the Project
- As a joint CEQA and NEPA document, the Final EIR/EIS also requires approval from the federal government prior to publication

# Federal Review Process

- Final EIR/EIS is currently undergoing Reclamation Regional Management review
- Next steps include:
  1. Review in Reclamation's DC Office along with the Department of Interior (DOI) Assistant Secretary of Water and Science and the DOI NEPA Review Team
  2. U.S. EPA publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Final EIS in the Federal Register
- Authority will publish the Final EIR/EIS on its website once Reclamation is authorized to move forward with the NOA publication

# Record of Decision (ROD)

- Activities to be completed prior to Reclamation signing a ROD:
  - Final EIS available to the public for 30-days
  - Completion of National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 process (cultural resources)
  - Completion of Endangered Species Act compliance
- ROD currently anticipated to be signed in mid- to late-2024

# Section 106 and ESA Compliance

- Section 106 process is ongoing
  - Authority and Reclamation have drafted a Programmatic Agreement (PA)
  - Reclamation submitted the draft PA to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in March 2022 for review and input
  - SHPO has not yet responded with comments
  - Elevating status to Strike Team for assistance
  - Once SHPO responds, Reclamation revises, then another round of comments and input from all parties
  - Reclamation then finalizes PA and it is complete once Reclamation and SHPO have signed
    - Authority and U.S. Army Corps also “Invited Signatories” but our signatures are not necessary to complete Section 106
- ESA compliance is underway
  - Update was provided at the June 2023 meeting, no changes in approach or schedule have occurred since June

# Next Steps in Briefing Process

- August 2023, Update on Final EIR/EIS
  - Last items prior to approval
- September or October 2023, Board Hearing
  - Any last items
  - EIR Certification
  - Adoption of Findings, Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program
  - Decision to Approve Project
  - Next Steps
    - Local considerations with MOUs and Local Community Working Group
    - Tribal considerations with MOA and Tribal Working Group

# Questions?