

# The County of Orange Report

Prepared for the Mesa Water District

September 23, 2022  
by Lewis Consulting Group



**~~SEPTEMBER LAFCO MEETING~~**

The September 14th meeting of Orange County LAFCO was cancelled and the next meeting will be held on October 12, 2022. Of interest to LAFCO is the possible impending vacancy of one of its members. A Superior Court judge has ruled that three Mission Viejo Councilmembers violated the city's term-limit law and must step down from office. One of the three is Wendy Bucknum, one of the two City representatives on LAFCO. The judge has amended his order to give Mission Viejo time to turn to the Appellate Court.

The City plans to appeal, but if they lose their appeal, Councilwoman Bucknum will be out of office for some period of time. She will however appear on the November 2022 ballot and will be eligible to serve on LAFCO if re-elected. The question is how will LAFCO or the City Selection Committee respond to a possible short-term vacancy?

## When Everything Else Has Been Solved . . .

### **Metropolitan Board Convenes First-Ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Forum**

*Above, from left: Los Angeles Department of Water & Power Executive Assistant to the General Manager on Workforce Diversity Ty Washington, Former Chief Diversity Officer at Coca-Cola and President of Bucherati Group Steve Bucherati, Metropolitan Chairwoman Gloria Gray, Metropolitan Chief DE&I Officer Liji Thomas, Metropolitan General Manager Adel Hagekhalil, HDR Inc. Global Equity Director Victoria Johnson, and Principal of JCL Consulting Group JC Lacey.*

Metropolitan's Board of Directors, executive managers, employees and the public participated in the district's inaugural forum on diversity, equity and inclusion on Aug. 23. The "Play to Win, Advancing Inclusive Excellence" event explored best-in-class practices to advance inclusive leadership and strategies to support a diverse workforce. The forum featured speakers from external companies and organizations who shared their perspectives and experiences about diversity's critical role and how those values translate into success.

In October 2021, as part of its ongoing dedication to improving its workplace culture for all employees, Metropolitan's Board of Directors adopted a Statement of Commitment pledging its support of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

The board recently established a first-ever board committee exclusively focused on diversity, equity and inclusion issues that will address matters related to underserved communities that have traditionally faced barriers associated with access to safe, clean and reliable water supplies and resources to support investments and job development in the water industry.

## Berkeley IGS Poll Explored Drought Opinions

A Berkeley IGS poll conducted August 8-15, 2022 queried California registered voters on a series of questions related to the drought. The huge poll of 9,254 registered voters yields a margin of error of +/- 2% with a confidence level of 95%.

### HOW SERIOUS DO YOU THINK CALIFORNIA'S WATER SHORTAGE IS?

	<u>STATEWIDE</u>	<u>ORANGE COUNTY</u>
VERY SERIOUS	71%	65%

### HOW MUCH HAVE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY BEEN AFFECTED BY THE CURRENT WATER SHORTAGE?

GREAT OR SOMEWHAT	40%	27%
LITTLE OR NONE	57%	70%

### ARE RESIDENTIAL WATER USERS DOING THEIR PART TO REDUCE WATER USAGE?

YES	32%	29%
NO	42%	44%

### HOW ABOUT AGRICULTURAL WATER USERS AND FARMERS?

YES	29%	25%
NO	28%	27%

### HOW ABOUT BUSINESSES AND COMMERCIAL USERS?

YES	13%	14%
NO	48%	48%

### HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS TO MAKE PERMANENT CHANGES TO THEIR OUTDOOR LANDSCAPING BY REMOVING LAWNS AND TURF AND REPLANTING WITH PLANTS AND SHRUBS THAT DON'T REQUIRE MUCH WATER?

IMPORTANT	72%	70%
NOT IMPORTANT	21%	23%

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## Orange County COVID-19 Update

ORANGE COUNTY COVID-19 STATS	9/22/2022	8/16/2022
CUMULATIVE CASES TO DATE	666,185	651,486
CUMULATIVE DEATHS TO DATE	7,432	7,274
DEATHS REPORTED THIS WEEK	27	12
CUMULATIVE TESTS TO DATE	10,009,222	9,808,587
TESTS REPORTED THIS WEEK	35,053	47,517
CASES CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED	124 *	314 *
CASES CURRENTLY IN ICU	21	44

\* = INCLUDES *ICU* CASES

## **Election Countdown Less Than Two Months**

As we approach the November 8<sup>th</sup> general election, our nation's most famous political prognosticators weigh in on the probability of the partisan control of the U.S. House and Senate.

PROGNOSTICATORS	U.S. HOUSE SEATS		U.S. SENATE SEATS	
	REP	DEM	REP	DEM
NATE SILVER / 538	228	207	49	51
REAL CLEAR POLITICS	235	200	50	50
LARRY SABATO/CRYSTAL BALL	229	206	50	50
POLITICO	226	209	50	50
COOK POLITICAL REPORT	229	206	49	51
<b>COMPOSITE / AVERAGE</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>

## **Colorado River Drought - An Alternative View**

Dr. Roy Spencer is NO QUACK.

Spencer earned his Ph.D in meteorology from the University of Wisconsin in 1981. As a senior scientist for Climate Studies at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, he and fellow scientist Dr. John Christy received NASA's Exceptional Scientific Achievement Award for their global temperature monitoring work with satellites. In 1996, both scientists received special awards from the American Meteorological Society "for developing a global, precise record of earth's temperature from operational polar-orbiting satellites, fundamentally advancing our ability to monitor climate." In 2001, Dr. Spencer joined Dr. Christy at the University of Alabama Huntsville, where he continues to serve as the Principal Research Scientist. Dr. Spencer is quick to point out that the entirety of his research is government funded - NASA, NOAA and the DOE.

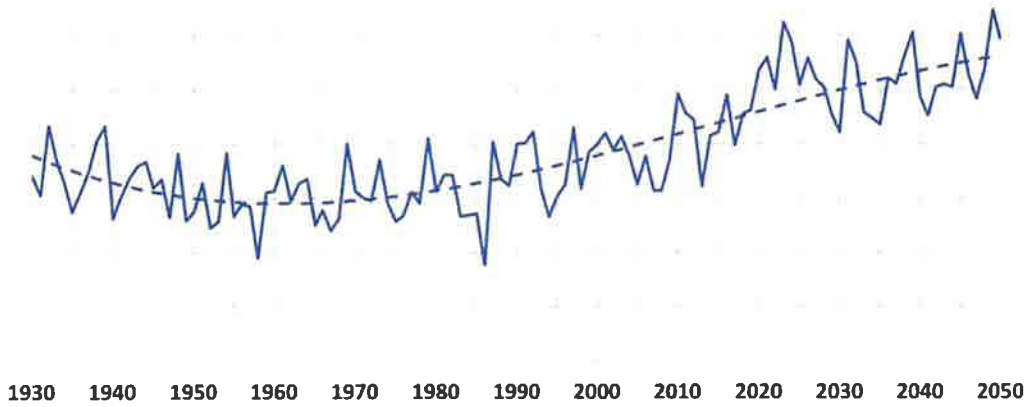
Dr. Spencer has an alternative view when it comes to the Colorado River drought. His thesis is that the Colorado River flow and water levels at Lake Mead and Lake Powell are not related to climate change, but instead to increased use combined with normal fluctuations in weather.

Dr. Spencer asserts the following points:

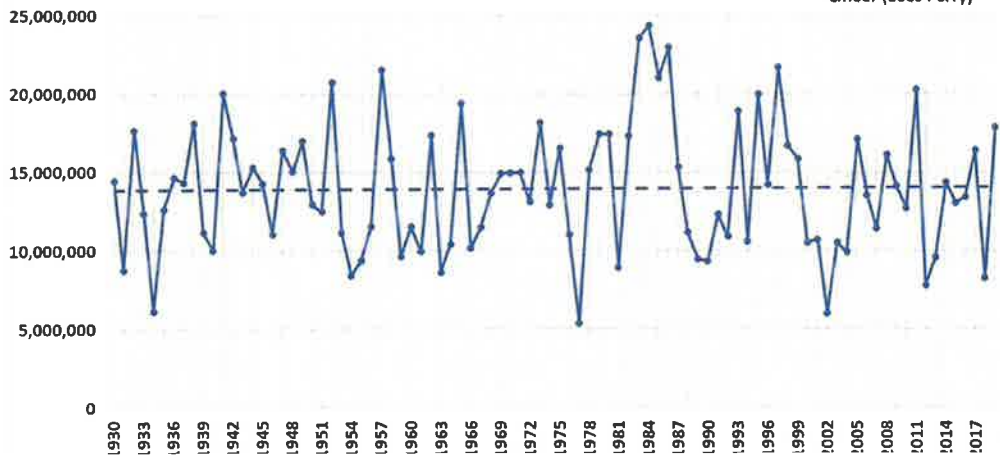
- ◆ Contrary to claims that drought is causing Lake Mead water levels to fall, the Colorado River natural flows into Lake Mead show no long-term trend since 1930
- ◆ Decadal time scale variations in river flow do occur, though, related to the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)
- ◆ Since about 2000, use of Lake Mead water has exceeded river inflow, causing water levels to drop. The negative phase of the PDO since that time has exacerbated the problem

As evidence, he provides a number of charts:

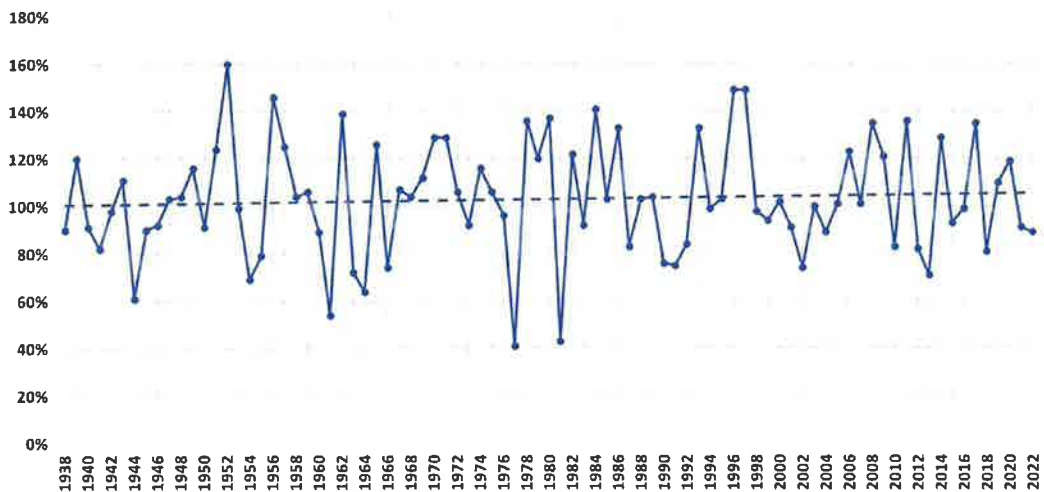
**CMIP6 Climate Model Yearly Precipitation (inches)**  
**(Lat = 37.5N-41.25N; Lon=250.3E - 254.1E)**  
**Average of 183 climate model members**



**Colorado River Natural Flows Into Lake Mead, 1930-2019**  
**(acre-ft per year)**

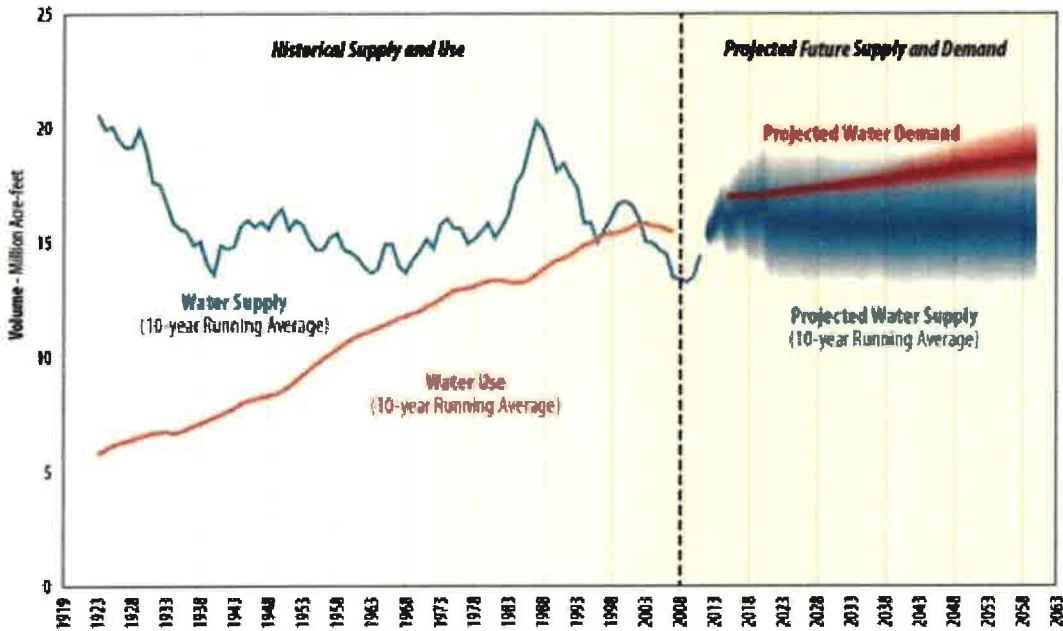


**April Upper Colorado River Basin Snowpack**  
**Departure from Median, 1938-2022**



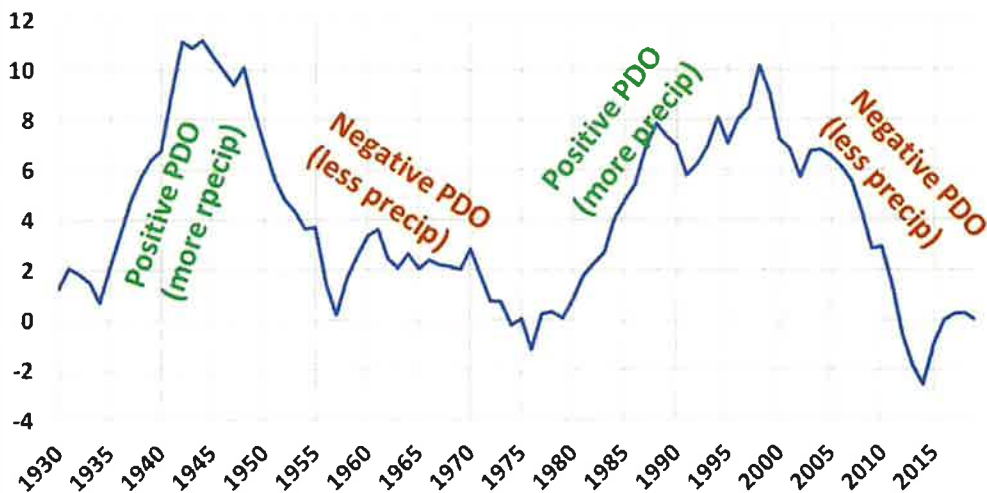
**FIGURE 2**

Historical Supply and Use<sup>1</sup> and Projected Future Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand



<sup>1</sup> Water L  
operation

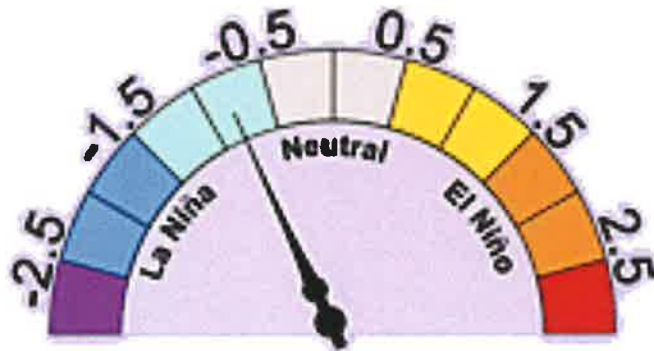
**Cumulative PDO Departures from Long-Term Average**



Dr. Spencer concludes his lengthy article with the following “The popular narrative that drought due to climate change is causing Lake Mead to have less water available to it is incorrect. Since 1930, there has been no long-term change in the Colorado River flow upstream of what is now Lake Mead. The latest climate models do not even predict a reduction in precipitation in the upper Colorado River watershed. Multi-decadal changes in river flow do occur, though, and are related to the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, a natural fluctuation in weather patterns over the northeast Pacific. Recent record-low water levels in Lake Mead are primarily due to record high water demand from the lake, since approximately 2000. The problem is being made somewhat worse by the negative phase of the PDO, also since approximately 2000.”

# ENSO METER

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Cold water emanating in South America provides a great picture of La Niña conditions.

# ENSO/SST Page

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