SUPERS:

L/Lake Mead, Nevada

S/David Palumbo, Bureau of Reclamation

S/Elizabeth Koebele, Water Policy Expert

S/John Entsminger, Southern Nevada Water Authority

S/Brad Hicks Reporting (no stand up)

(- - ANCHOR LEAD - -)

DEADLINE TO AVOID DISASTER.

THE COLORADO RIVER IS AT RISK OF RUNNING DRY, AND 40-MILLION AMERICANS ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING THEIR WATER SUPPLY.

THE SEVEN STATES THAT PULL WATER FROM THE RIVER HAD UNTIL TUESDAY TO COME UP WITH A CONSENSUS ON HOW TO CUT BACK.

BRAD HICKS EXPLAINS — THEY FAILED. AND THE HIGH STAKES, JUST GOT HIGHER.

(- - PKG - -)

WITH AMERICA’S BIGGEST MANMADE RESERVOIRS, LAKE MEAD AND LAKE POWELL, DOWN TO A QUARTER OF THEIR FORMER LEVELS… THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ISN’T MESSING AROUND.

AFTER THE SEVEN COLORADO RIVER BASIN STATES COULDN’T COME UP WITH A UNIFIED PLAN LAST YEAR TO CUT BACK AS MUCH AS 30 PERCENT… THE GOVERNMENT GAVE THEM A NEW DEADLINE - THIS TIME WITH AN ULTIMATUM.

(- - SOT - -)

S/David Palumbo, Bureau of Reclamation

“If we don’t have a consensus alternative, we will have a federal alternative that we will implement.”

BUT MONTHS OF TENSE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE STATES CAME UP SHORT, AND TUESDAY’S DEADLINE PASSED WITH NO PLAN.

(- - SOT - -)

S/Elizabeth Koebele, Water Policy Expert

No one really wants to show their cards right now, even in an emergency situation.

IT’S AN EMERGENCY SITUATION BECAUSE BOTH LAKES ARE NEARING DEADPOOL— WHEN THE LEVELS WOULD BE SO LOW, NO WATER AT ALL WOULD FLOW THROUGH THE DAMS, CUTTING OFF POWER TO MILLIONS, AND LEAVING ARIZONA AND CALIFORNIA WITHOUT A DROP.

THE SCENARIO IS THE RESULT OF TWO DECADES OF DROUGHT, AND POLICIES PUT IN PLACE A CENTURY AGO THAT ALLOCATED MORE WATER THAN THE RIVER ACTUALLY HAS.

(- -SOT- -)

S/John Entsminger, Southern Nevada Water Authority

We have 19th century law, 20th century infrastructure, and 21st century climate. And those three things don’t fit well together.

SIX OF THE STATES DID AGREE ON AN OUTLINE, BUT CALIFORNIA IS HOLDING OUT.

THE STATE HAS SENIOR RIGHTS TO THE WATER — AND IT WANTS ARIZONA TO GIVE UP MORE FIRST.

FAILURE TO MEET THE DEADLINE NOW OPENS THE DOOR FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO STEP IN WITH MANDATORY CUTBACKS ACROSS THE BOARD.

BUT IF THE FEDERAL MANDATES SIDESTEP CALIFORNIA’S SENIORITY RIGHTS, THE STATE IS PROMISING LAWSUITS THAT COULD LAST LONGER THAN THE BIG LAKES.

BRAD HICKS REPORTING.