Video title:  High Stakes Standoff

Short description:

A HIGH STAKES STANDOFF OVER HOW  TO SAVE THE COLORADO RIVER—

AND WITH THE BIGGEST MAN-MADE RESERVOIR IN AMERICA - LAKE MEAD - RUNNING DRY, TIME IS RUNNING OUT.

BRAD HICKS SHOWS YOU WHY TWO STATES ARE LOCKED IN A STRUGGLE THAT COULD CRIPPLE THE WEST… AND FORETELL FUTURE FIGHTS  OVER THE COSTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

Links to video:

High Stakes H264 Mono:

<https://vimeo.com/806184425>

High Stakes MXF Split Track:

<https://vimeo.com/806184867>

Script:

WHERE THE COLORADO RIVER CARVES THE BORDER BETWEEN ARIZONA AND CALIFORNIA… THE BANKS ARE BARELY A HUNDRED FEET APART.

BUT WITH THE RIFT OVER WATER RIGHTSSEPARATING THE TWO STATES, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE A THOUSAND MILES.

DESPITE AN ORDER FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THE SEVEN COLORADO RIVER BASIN STATES HAVE STRUGGLED TO AGREE ON WATER USE CUTS THAT COULD SAVE THE SYSTEM FROM CRASHING.

(— SOT —)

S/Elizabeth Koebele, Water Policy Expert

“Now that we’re in such a dire state, that collaboration is being challenged.”

AND THE BATTLE LINE IS DRAWN BETWEEN THE TWO BIGGEST USERS.

(— SOT —)

S/Rhett Larson, Water Law Attorney

“California has something going for it, and that is it’s at the front of the line.   It has the law going for it.”

WHICH SAYS ARIZONA, BECAUSE IT TAPPED INTO THE RIVER LATER,  HAS TO BEAR THE BRUNT FIRST,

BEFORE FARMS IN CALIFORNIA CUT BACK.

BUT THE OTHER SIX STATES, INCLUDING ARIZONA, CLAIM WITH THE RAPID PACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, THAT CENTURY-OLD RULE IS UNFAIR.

THEY’RE PROPOSING CALIFORNIA–  WHICH IS BY FAR THE BIGGEST USER - BE FORCED TO MAKE THE BIGGEST CUTS.

(— SOT —)

S/Tina Shields, California Water Manager

“That’s kind of like when you enter into a contract, but when it’s your turn to pay up you say, oh, i didn’t really mean it.”

CALIFORNIA’S PLAN PROTECTS ITS POWERFUL LEGAL POSITION,

AND INSTEAD WOULD ALMOST COMPLETELY CUT OFF ARIZONA’S BIGGEST CITIES TO MAKE THE SAVINGS.

THE DECISION IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

(— SOT —)

S/Rhett Larson, Water Law Attorney

"The Bureau of Reclamation is going to pick its option, move forward, and that will spark litigation.”

(— SOT —)

S/Tom Buschatzke, Arizona Water Negotiator

“Litigation is a difficult pathway.  It will take many many years, if not decades.”

IN THE MEANTIME, AS LAKE MEAD GETS LOWER, THE TWO STATES ARE LOCKED IN A STARE-DOWN…

(— SOT —)

S/Tina Shields, California Water Manager

“I worry about being polite too long.”

… EACH APPARENTLY WILLING TO PUSH THE OTHER TO THE BRINK.

(— SOT —)

S/Tom Buschatzke, Arizona Water Negotiator

“Their senior right on a piece of paper doesn’t mean anything if the river’s dry; there’s nothing for them to use.”

BRAD HICKS, REPORTING.