

AUG 19 1994



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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

[Handwritten Signature]
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
8-17

August 5, 1994

To: Board of Directors (Committee on Legislation--Action)
From: General Manager
Subject: Support for Federal Legislation to Amend the Colorado River
Basin Salinity Control Act

Report

In March 1993, the Department of the Interior's Office of the Inspector General published an audit report on the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) implementation of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (Program). The Office of the Inspector General recommended that Reclamation seek changes in Title II of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act to simplify the process for obtaining Congressional approval of new cost-effective salinity control projects. Reclamation's Program expenditures are nearing the appropriations ceiling established by Congress. In March 1994, Reclamation began a review of its Program and requested comments from interested parties regarding its future role in the Program. A number of comments received echoed the recommendation that the approval process be simplified and suggested that the appropriations ceiling be removed. The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), composed of representatives of the Governors of the Basin states, concurs with the Office of the Inspector General's recommendation and in May 1994 authorized its Executive Director to draft legislation for its consideration.

On July 20, the Forum's Executive Director informed Metropolitan that Senator Robert Bennett of Utah wishes to introduce such legislation. Senators Bennett, Hatch (Utah), and Campbell (Colorado) introduced a bill (S. 2319) on July 29 which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The bill would amend the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act to authorize

additional measures to carry out the control of salinity upstream of Imperial Dam in a cost effective manner. A hearing on the bill was held by the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on August 4.

The legislation would authorize a Basin-wide salinity control effort that would be implemented by Reclamation. The measures to be implemented under the Basin-wide effort would be in addition to those salinity control units already authorized by law. Such measures could reduce salinity from saline springs, leaking wells, irrigation sources, erosion of public and private land, or other sources. The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) would submit a planning report concerning the effort to the appropriate committees of Congress. Expenditure of funds for implementation could then occur one month after submittal of the planning report. Reclamation could implement the measures directly or through non-federal entities.

S. 2319 would also modify the appropriations ceiling language. The ceiling would be increased by \$75 million to carry out the Basin-wide measures. While this amount would not be sufficient to complete the Program, it would permit Reclamation to continue implementing the Program for a three- to five-year period while evaluating the effectiveness of the new opportunities afforded by the legislation. It is anticipated that the Clinton Administration will support enactment of the legislation.

Metropolitan should support legislation which would:

- simplify the process for Reclamation obtaining Congressional approval of new salinity control measures, and
- modify the appropriations ceiling,

as it would permit continued implementation of the Program, and maintain the quality of Colorado River water diverted.

Board Committee Assignment

This letter is referred for action to:

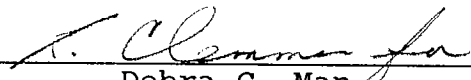
The Committee on Legislation because it shall review and make recommendations regarding proposals for legislation that may affect Metropolitan pursuant to Administrative Code Section 2491(a).

Recommendation

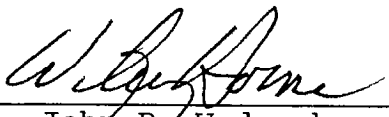
COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION FOR ACTION.

That the Board support the enactment of federal legislation which would (1) authorize a Colorado River Basin-wide salinity control effort to be implemented through Reclamation, and (2) modify the federal appropriations ceiling, and that the Board further authorize the General Manager to participate in negotiations to secure enactment of such legislation.

John R. Wodraska
General Manager

By: 
Debra C. Man
Chief of Planning and Resources

Concur:


John R. Wodraska
General Manager

JPM:bvf