

● **Board of Directors**
Water Planning, Quality and Resources Committee

February 13, 2001 Board Meeting

10-3

Subject

Colorado River Interim Surplus Guidelines Overview

Description

Record of Decision

On January 16, 2001, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt signed a Record of Decision to implement Colorado River Interim Surplus Guidelines (Guidelines) associated with the Final Environmental Impact Statement of December 2000. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will use the Guidelines in determining the availability of surplus water through 2016 in conjunction with:

- the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968,
- the Long-range Operating Criteria for the Colorado River Reservoirs, and
- the U.S. Supreme Court decree in *Arizona v. California*.

California Plan

Adoption of the Guidelines recognizes California’s plan to reduce reliance on surplus water, in moving toward diversion of its normal apportionment of Colorado River water. They become effective 30 days after their publication in the Federal Register (scheduled for January 25, 2001).

In general, the Guidelines:

- provide California with a “soft landing” with respect to its transition to meeting its Colorado River water needs within its normal apportionment;
- provide Metropolitan with greater predictability of surplus Colorado River water for the next 15 years;
- enhance the opportunity to place Colorado River Aqueduct (Aqueduct) water in storage for conjunctive-use programs; and
- allow for the storage of surplus Colorado River water beyond the capacity of the Aqueduct.

Specific aspects of the Guidelines are listed in [Attachment 1](#).

Colorado River Aqueduct

The likelihood of diverting 1.25 maf into the Aqueduct will vary by year:

Years	Likelihood of Diverting 1.25 maf Prior to Exercise of Dry Year Options or Groundwater Storage Withdrawals (percent)
2002 to 2005	100
2006 to 2011	95 to 81
2012 to 2016	76 to 62

While the likelihood of diverting sufficient water to fill the Aqueduct is lower in certain years to an extent, as compared to the alternative in Exhibit A of the October 15, 1999 *Key Terms for Quantification Settlement among the State of California, IID, CVWD, and MWD*, it was necessary for California to recognize the concern of Arizona that a multi-year drought could result in a reduction in Arizona's diversions to below its normal apportionment. Negotiation of an agreement(s) to store water in Arizona and/or the Lower Coachella Valley in the near term would increase the likelihood that Metropolitan would have sufficient water to fill the Aqueduct from 2007 as would the availability of water from off-Aqueduct groundwater storage and conjunctive use programs.

Use of the Guidelines by the Secretary in making annual decisions regarding the availability of surplus water has been simulated in Metropolitan studies of future operations and the need for new facilities. In anticipation of these Guidelines, Metropolitan has been pursuing conjunctive use and indigenous water transfer programs along the Aqueduct and other cooperative water supply programs to ensure Aqueduct supply reliability. Provided that Metropolitan meets its goal in these programs, no additional costs or capital program changes are anticipated as a result of the issuance of these Guidelines, which are substantially equivalent to those being used for Metropolitan planning since the summer of 2000.

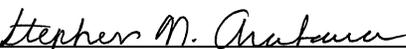
Policy

Metropolitan supports:

- Revised set of operating criteria for the Colorado River reservoir system that increases the availability of water in the Lower Basin on an interim basis. (Minute Item 42820)

Fiscal Impact

Information only.


 Stephen N. Arakawa
 Manager, Water Resource Management

1/26/2001
 Date


 General Manager

1/29/2001
 Date

Attachment 1

BLA 833

Specific Aspects of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Interim Surplus Guidelines

The Guidelines:

- specify priorities for Colorado River water apportioned to but unused by Arizona, California, and/or Nevada and for surplus Colorado River water in meeting the water needs of Metropolitan and Southern Nevada Water Authority;
- allow Metropolitan to divert at least 1.25 million acre-feet (maf) of Colorado River water in the next year as long as the elevation of Lake Mead is projected to be at or above 1,145 feet (15.9 maf) on January 1 of that year [with the prescribed January 1 vacant flood control storage space, a full Lake Mead has historically been represented by a Lake elevation of about 1,215 feet (25.2 maf)];
- provide for a lesser amount of surplus water for Metropolitan in the next year when the elevation of Lake Mead is projected to be at or above 1,125 feet (13.7 maf) but below 1,145 feet on January 1 of that year (potential dry-year supplies and/or withdrawals from proposed groundwater storage programs could replace unavailable surplus water);
- would not provide for surplus water if the elevation of Lake Mead is projected to be below 1,125 feet (13.7 maf) (potential dry-year supplies and/or withdrawals from proposed groundwater storage programs could replace unavailable surplus water);
- will remain effective for the 15-year interim period if California continues to make measurable progress in reducing its reliance on surplus Colorado River water, with a benchmark step down in consumptive use of 110,000 acre-feet per year by 2003 increasing to 380,000 acre-feet per year by 2012;
- could result in the Secretary determining a shortage condition more frequently, or for a shortage to be more severe or last longer than would have otherwise occurred;
- provide for forbearance and reparation arrangements between Lower Division states and individual contractors and, in the absence of such agreements, California would receive only 50 percent of the surplus water made available; and
- allow for mid-year review of the current Annual Operating Plan for Colorado River System Reservoirs to provide for additional deliveries, if appropriate.