



● **Colorado River Management Report**

Summary

This report highlights the activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River Resources during April 2011

Detailed Report

Upper Colorado Basin Snowpack Sets New Record

Following one of the snowiest Aprils on record, the May 1, 2011 Upper Colorado River Basin snowpack reached its highest level ever recorded. The Rocky Mountains in Colorado received snowfall all but two days during April. Between April 1 and May 1, 2011 the April through July runoff forecast increased by 1.5 million acre-feet, from 9.5 MAF to 11 MAF. On April 1, 3 MAF of equalization releases were already triggered by the high runoff forecast. The new forecast will provide additional releases into Lake Mead, although the actual amount will not be known until the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) completes its updated operational studies expected in mid-May 2011.

In early April, due to the impact of equalization releases being made from Lake Powell to Lake Mead, Reclamation projected that there was a 21 percent chance of surplus water being made available to Metropolitan by the year 2014, and only a 2 percent probability of shortage during that same period. The new runoff numbers will further increase the likelihood of surplus and decrease the chance of shortages in the next few years.

New Report Highlights Climate Change Concerns for Colorado Basin

Despite this year being one of the snowiest winters ever recorded, a new report issued by the Department of the Interior during April once again highlighted the scientific communities conclusions that the Colorado River will likely see less runoff in the future due to climate change impacts. While the impact to California is less certain, the Colorado River and Rio Grande are the rivers at greatest risk of having reduced future flows, according to the report. The Colorado River Basin States and Reclamation have been including the potential impact of climate change in their two-year study to evaluate the potential long-term supply and demand imbalance in the Basin. The study includes an assumption for the potential of reduced flows due to climate change, and quantifies how the water users would be impacted. The first interim report from that study is due to be released in late May 2011, while the final report from the study is anticipated in the summer of 2012.

Metropolitan Again Declines to Recall 100 TAF Table A Transfer to Desert and Coachella

For the sixth year in a row, on April 30 Metropolitan declined to exercise its option to recall 100 TAF of Table A water it transferred to Desert Water Agency (Desert) and Coachella Valley Water District (Coachella) six years ago. In 2005, as a money saving measure, Metropolitan transferred 100 TAF of its 2 million acre-feet of State Water Project (SWP) Table A supplies to Desert and Coachella, with the option of recalling the transfer in any given year. The transfer reduced Metropolitan's fixed SWP supplies by more than \$15 million each year the transfer is not recalled. Metropolitan provides Desert and Coachella Colorado River water to meet its transfer obligation each year. Originally, due to reduced Colorado River supplies, it was assumed that Metropolitan would be recalling that transfer, on average, one out of every two years. However, due to improved Colorado River supplies available to Metropolitan since 2005, Metropolitan has been able to avoid recalling the transfer, and saving significant financial resources in doing so.