



## ● Colorado River Management Report

### Summary

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This report provides a summary of the activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River Resources for the month of January 2012

### Detailed Report

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#### Colorado Basin in Critically Dry Condition

Following last year's wet conditions on the Colorado River, 2012 is shaping up to be one of the driest years on record. As of February 1, 2012, the basin-wide snowpack averages 71 percent of normal, with dry conditions forecast to continue into early February 2012. The current snow levels are similar to the 2002 levels for this date, which ended up being the second driest year on record for the Colorado Basin.

The dry conditions have significantly reduced the end-of-year projections for Lake Mead storage. Last summer, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) projected that, with average snowfall this winter, Lake Mead would end 2012 at an elevation of 1159' – 14 feet above the surplus trigger. The current projection for Lake Mead's end-of-2012 storage is 1120' – 39 feet lower than was projected just six months ago. The dry conditions mean that it is very unlikely Metropolitan will have access to surplus water in the near future. Staff will discuss updated water supply conditions in the Colorado Basin during the February 2012 Water Planning and Stewardship Committee meeting.

#### Negotiations between the United States and Mexico Continue

During the month of January, the Basin States and Reclamation developed a formal response to a proposal from Mexico to implement a water management agreement between the United States and Mexico, which if approved would be adopted as a minute to the 1944 United States-Mexico Water Treaty. The counter proposal, in the form of a draft minute, was sent to Mexico in advance of a meeting between the two countries scheduled for February 2012. While the draft minute includes details about how water would be managed between Mexico and the United States, the Basin States acknowledged that additional agreements would be required among United States agencies to implement the proposal. Included in the agreements needed would be a forbearance agreement among United States water contractors to allow entities in the United States to partner with Mexico to develop conserved water supplies for the benefit of both countries. If both countries reach agreement, it is anticipated that a new minute would be approved in the next few months.

#### Colorado River Basin Study Receives Ideas from Public

The Colorado River Basin Study, which is evaluating options and strategies to address water supply imbalances over the next 50 years, completed a month-long period in which the public was invited to provide ideas to meet current and future water supply needs along the Colorado River. More than 45 different concepts were submitted, ranging from large projects (e.g., a large desalination plant on Sea of Cortez) to changes in rules for water management (e.g., adoption of new rules permitting interstate water transfers). With the closing of the public input period, Reclamation and the Basin States have begun to evaluate all of the options received against a set of criteria that include cost, implementability, and quantity of water demand met. A final report is scheduled to be released by August 2012, which will include recommendations for the Basin States and federal government to consider.

#### Metropolitan, Coachella Discuss Potential for New Aqueduct Turnout

In January, staff from Metropolitan and Coachella Valley Water District (Coachella) met to discuss the potential of constructing a new turnout from the Colorado River Aqueduct to meet the water demands of a new development in the Shavers Valley, east of the Coachella Valley. Under the proposal being discussed, Coachella would annex a planned development along the Interstate 10 corridor into its service area. The new development

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would be midway between Chiriaco Summit and the Coachella Valley. In order to provide water to the new development, which would include housing and commercial units, a new turnout would be constructed off of the Colorado River Aqueduct downstream of the Hinds pumping plant, and water would be delivered to a spreading basin to recharge the groundwater above the proposed development. Coachella would use its existing exchange agreement with Metropolitan to direct a portion of its State Water Project water exchanged with Metropolitan for Colorado River water to the new turnout in lieu of delivering all of its exchange water to the Whitewater Service Connection. A water treatment plant would be constructed to treat groundwater to meet the area's needs. Before any water would be provided to Coachella at a new turnout, an operating agreement would be needed between the two agencies that would include terms governing conditions under which water would be made available at the new location. If approved between the two agencies, water deliveries to the new turnout would be expected to begin in 2015.