



## ● 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 May 2012.

### Detailed Report

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#### **Reclamation Finalizes 2011 Colorado River Water Accounting Report**

In May, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) released its final year 2011 water accounting for the Colorado River. The accounting report includes all of the water diversions and transfer for the Lower Basin, as well as documentation of Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) water in Lake Mead. In the report, Reclamation acknowledged that Imperial Irrigation District (IID) fell short in conserving sufficient water to meet its contractual water agreement to San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) by about 17,000 acre-feet. Reclamation also noted that the appropriate accounting for the impact of that shortfall to Metropolitan and IID is under review. Metropolitan and IID do not agree with how the transfer shortfall should be accounted for, and Reclamation agreed to make a final determination at a later date. The report shows that Metropolitan created 193,000 acre-feet of ICS in 2011, although that figure may be adjusted depending upon how Reclamation determines to account for the IID-SDCWA transfer.

#### **Metropolitan Submits Congressional Testimony in Support of Colorado Salinity Control Program**

Last month, Metropolitan submitted testimony to Congress and the relevant departments urging support for fully funding the Colorado River Salinity Control Program in the next fiscal year. Through the efforts of the program, the salinity in the Colorado River is about 100 milligrams per liter lower than it would have been without the program. The Colorado River Salinity Control Forum (Forum), which includes a representative from Metropolitan, works with Reclamation to oversee implementation of the program. One of the challenges facing the Forum is the future of the Paradox Valley Well, which captures brine water of about 240,000 milligrams per liter and injects the brine 2 miles underground. The well is nearing the end of its useful life, and the Colorado River is at risk for receiving the 110,000 tons of salt that are captured by the well each year. The Forum is evaluating options including drilling a new well or developing evaporation ponds to prevent the salt from entering the Colorado River. A pilot project for the evaporation ponds is under development.

#### **Colorado River Basin Study releases Water Demand Report**

Also in the month of May, the Colorado River Basin States (Basin States) and Reclamation released a comprehensive demand report, projecting potential Colorado River water demands through the year 2060. Those demands will be compared with the available supply to determine the future supply and demand gap. The study received over 100 ideas from the public that will be evaluated in the study to determine options for reducing the water supply and demand gap. Options will be evaluated based on cost, water quantity and quality, legal issues, regulatory issues, energy requirements, and other parameters. Some of the options being evaluated include increased water conservation and reuse, additional agricultural to urban transfers, and building seawater desalination plants (in addition to those already being pursued) in California and Mexico. The study is scheduled to be completed this September.

#### **Basin States and Mexico to Meet to Better Understand Issues**

Mexico formally responded in May to the United States' draft proposal to implement a binational water management agreement between the two countries. The response from Mexico was significantly different from the United States' proposal, and the Basin States and Reclamation decided to set up informal meetings between the two countries so that each better understands the other country's issues. As a result, a three-day meeting has

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been scheduled for early June 2012, with potential follow-up meetings as needed. After those meetings, the Basin States and Reclamation will consider the best path forward.