



## ● Colorado River Management Report

### Summary

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The report provides a summary of the activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River Resources for the month of May 2013.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### **Reclamation and Basin States Begin Next Phase of Colorado River Supply and Demand Study**

On May 28, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Anne Castle, along with the leaders of the seven Colorado River Basin States (Basin States), announced the beginning of the next phase to study the future water supply needs of the Colorado River Basin and develop options and strategies to meet the projected imbalance. The Colorado River Water Supply and Demand Study (Basin Study) was completed last December, and analyzed at programmatic level options and strategies that could be implemented to meet the Basin's long-term water supply needs. The Basin Study concluded that the potential impacts of climate change and continued growth in the southwest, without development of additional water supply programs, could result in an annual water supply deficiency of 3.2 million acre-feet. A number of workgroups have been set up to refine the assumptions made in the Basin Study. The workgroups include a variety of stakeholders, including government officials, water agencies, conservation organizations, tribal interests, recreation interests, and power generators.

The initial focus of the workgroups is on three areas: municipal and industrial conservation and water reuse (M&I Conservation Workgroup); agricultural conservation and transfers; and healthy streamflows. The first two workgroups will quantify the conservation and transfers that have already been implemented, document programs that have been successful, and determine future plans to conserve additional water. The groups will also evaluate the potential for additional conservation and transfers beyond what is currently planned. The healthy streamflow workgroup will identify priority locations that may have basin-wide implications to a healthy river system and identify opportunities to improve stream conditions. All of the workgroups are charged with developing a report of their findings by the end of 2013. Metropolitan staff has been appointed a co-chair of the M&I Conservation Workgroup.

#### **Colorado River Salinity Control Forum Celebrates Completion of Grand Valley Salinity Control**

In May, the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum (Forum) celebrated the completion of the Grand Valley Salinity Control Project in western Colorado. The Forum and various federal agencies began funding salinity control projects in Grand Valley in the 1980s, which have included actions such as lining canals and installing sprinkler irrigation systems. These actions reduce the water percolation into the saline soils under the irrigated areas, which in turn reduce saline agricultural drainage from flowing into the Colorado River. A total of 60,000 acres of farmland has received irrigation improvements, resulting in a reduced salt load of about 140,000 tons per year that would otherwise reach the Colorado River. Metropolitan staff serves on the Forum. Metropolitan also helps fund the program through an assessment on the energy it receives from the Hoover Dam Power Generation Plant.

The Forum also discussed options to replace the well in Paradox Valley that captures brine water and injects it two miles below the surface. The well has been in operation for about 20 years, preventing about 110,000 tons of salt per year from entering the Delores River, a tributary to the Colorado River. The operation of the well has caused earthquakes in the area, including a magnitude 4.4 quake in January 2013. As a result of the earthquake, the well is being operated at reduced capacity, and alternatives are being considered to replace the well. The

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National Environmental Policy Act process evaluating alternatives has begun, with a Record of Decision expected by 2016. Alternatives include drilling a new well or constructing evaporation ponds.

### **IID, Imperial County, and APCD Approve Salton Sea Restoration Term Sheet**

On May 14, following weeks of negotiations, Imperial Irrigation District (IID), Imperial County, and the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) approved a term sheet relating to Salton Sea restoration and funding. The agencies stated that the goal of the negotiations was to resolve all litigation issues between IID, Imperial County, and the APCD, by exploring funding opportunities to restore the Salton Sea and adequately mitigate air quality impacts. Metropolitan was not involved in the negotiations and has not endorsed the term sheet.

### **USBR Directs IID to Repay 2010 Unauthorized Diversion to Salton Sea**

As was reported at the May 3 Water Planning and Stewardship Committee meeting, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) sent a letter to IID regarding the delivery of 47,000 acre-feet of water to the Salton Sea in 2010. When IID delivered the water to the Salton Sea, which was not generated through conservation actions as required by the Colorado River Water Delivery Agreement (CRWDA), Reclamation initially did not take a position, but did note that California would have to repay the water to Lake Mead at a later date. Reclamation's May 3 letter confirmed that IID's actions were not consistent with the CRWDA, and required IID to develop a plan by June 30, 2013 to pay the water back.