



- 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 October 2013.

## Purpose

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Informational

## Detailed Report

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### **Metropolitan Hosts Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum Meeting**

On October 23 and 24, Metropolitan hosted the semi-annual meeting of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) at the Metropolitan Headquarters Building. Formed in the 1970s, the Forum consists of three gubernatorial appointees from each of the seven Colorado River Basin States (Basin States), with the goal of reducing salinity in the Colorado River caused by both natural and anthropogenic sources. Through the efforts of the Forum, the salinity in Metropolitan's Colorado River Aqueduct is about 75 parts per million less today than it otherwise would have been without the Forum's actions. Metropolitan funds its share of developing and implementing salinity projects by paying a \$2.5 million surcharge on energy it receives from power generation at Hoover Dam.

There were two key issues facing the Forum that were discussed at the October meeting: (1) developing a plan to replace the aging Paradox Well in western Colorado; and (2) discussing options to address potential upcoming funding shortfalls. Paradox Well captures hyper-saline groundwater and injects the brine two miles below the surface. The Forum and the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will determine which option to pursue during next year's Forum meetings. The other key item of discussion was the potential shortfall in funding salinity control projects at their current amount. The Basin States provide matching funds with the federal government for salinity projects, but those funds may not be sufficient in future years. The Forum is discussing options that might provide additional revenue in the future.

### **Colorado River Outlook Improves**

Each month, Reclamation updates its two-year outlook for the operation of its Colorado River reservoirs, including Lake Mead and Lake Powell. Back in August 2013, Reclamation's forecast, assuming average snowfall this year, was that Lake Mead would drop 45 feet in the next two years and reach an elevation of 1,061 feet – well below the level (1,075 feet) that would trigger a first-ever shortage declaration on the Colorado River. However, the Colorado River Basin experienced one of the wetter late summer seasons on record. Lake Mead is now forecast to reach a low point of 1,076 feet in 2015 – a full 15 feet higher than was projected back in August 2013. The October 2013 forecast projects that under average conditions, a shortage is not likely on the Colorado River for at least three years.

Despite the improved outlook, it is anticipated shortages may occur on the Colorado River in the not-too-distant future. The Basin States have been discussing short-term options to minimize reservoir drawdown. Metropolitan staff is engaged in these discussions and will keep the Board updated on developments.

### **Southern Nevada Water Authority Requests Metropolitan to Divert and Store over 70,000 Acre-feet in 2013**

On October 30, Southern Nevada Water Authority (Water Authority) requested Metropolitan to divert and store 70,000 to 75,000 acre-feet of water in 2013 under the storage and exchange agreement between the two agencies. Under the terms of the agreement, two-thirds of the water diverted by Metropolitan will be added to Water

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Authority's storage account within Metropolitan's Service Area, which will be returned to Water Authority at some future date. The remaining one-third will be retained by Metropolitan for its own use.