



- Colorado River Management Report

## Summary

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This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month of August 2015.

## Purpose

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Informational

## Detailed Report

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### Improved Water Supply Conditions on the Colorado River

Following a wet spring and summer in the Colorado River Basin, the likelihood of a first-ever shortage declaration has been significantly reduced for the next few years. In early May, before the heavy rains in the Colorado Basin began, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) forecasted about a 50 percent chance of a shortage on the Colorado River in 2016, increasing to around a 75 percent chance in 2017. In August, Reclamation updated those projections following three wet months, and the outlook for a shortage in 2016 is now 0 percent and in 2017 is approximately 18 percent. The much lower numbers provide increased opportunities to Metropolitan, because as long as the Colorado River Basin stays out of shortages, Metropolitan is able to develop and potentially implement interstate and even international water management programs to help fill the Colorado River Aqueduct.

### United States and Mexico Officials Continue Negotiations for Successor to Minute 319

In August, representatives from the United States and Mexico met to continue negotiations for a follow-up minute to Minute 319 to the United States-Mexico International Water Treaty. Minute 319 is about half way through its five-year term, and the two countries are considering which components of the minute should be included in a successor minute. Minute 319 included a pilot agricultural conservation program in the Mexicali Valley, funded by Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Project, Imperial Irrigation District, and Metropolitan, with a total of 95,000 acre-feet of the conserved water being made available to the United States' funding agencies. Metropolitan, and other agencies, are interested in developing a longer-term conservation project with Mexico, and are exploring new binational water management opportunities that could be included in the next minute.

### Bard Water District Discusses Potential Pilot Fallowing Program

On August 24, Bard Water District held a meeting with local farmers in the area to discuss potential interest in a pilot fallowing program that could be implemented as early as next spring. The program being discussed is a one- or two-year seasonal fallowing program, where farmers would be compensated on a voluntary basis to not grow crops during the late-spring through early-fall period, when water use is highest and crop yields are lowest. The farmers asked many questions about a potential program, and if there is sufficient interest, Metropolitan will begin to negotiate an agreement with Bard Water District, with the goal of the agencies' respective boards considering the program later this year. Bard Water District is part of the Yuma Project Reservation Division, which has a priority 2 water right on the Colorado River. Under the terms of the Quantification Settlement Agreement, any reduction in use by Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) or Bard Water District would accrue directly to Metropolitan.

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### **Metropolitan's Chairman, Staff Meet with PVID Board**

On August 20, Metropolitan's Chairman of the Board Record and staff spoke at a public meeting hosted by Palo Verde Irrigation District's Board of Trustees in Blythe. The purpose of the meeting was for Metropolitan to explain its long-term plans in the Palo Verde Valley (Valley) following the purchase of additional land in July 2015. While there was general support for the fallowing program, several in the audience were concerned about what Metropolitan's land purchase might mean for the Valley in the future. The Chairman told the group that Metropolitan has a decade long track record of working cooperatively with Valley interests, and the purchase of additional lands would not change that approach. After the public comments concluded, several people thanked Metropolitan for making the trip out to Blythe to share its views on future relationships with the PVID Board and local community.