



- 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 February 2016.

## Purpose

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Informational

## Detailed Report

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### Warm and Dry February for Colorado River Basin

Like much of the Southwestern United States, the Colorado River Basin (Basin) experienced warm and dry conditions during February. As a result, the runoff forecast for the Basin was lowered to 89 percent of average in late February, with an expectation of a lower figure when the official March 2016 forecast is made. Last fall, long range forecasts suggested that the strong El Nino conditions favored a wet year for the Basin, but as of March 1, 2016, these conditions have not materialized, and with the updated information the Basin is now forecast to have its driest year since 2013. On March 1, 2016, Lake Mead stood at 1,082 feet; the lowest level for that date since the reservoir was initially filled. The current forecast projects the reservoir to end the year at 1,077 feet, which would avoid a first-ever shortage declaration by 2 feet. If dry conditions continue, it is possible that the Lake Mead projection could drop, triggering a shortage for 2017. Staff will track the level of Lake Mead as the year progresses.

### Reclamation to add \$5 million for System Conservation

On February 8, in response to ongoing drought conditions, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) approved the addition of \$5 million to the Pilot System Conservation Program (Program). The Program was approved in 2014 with contributions from Denver Water, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Project, Reclamation, and Metropolitan totaling \$11 million for water conservation activities in the Basin. The saved water would be added to storage in Lake Mead or Powell, depending on whether it is an Upper Basin or Lower Basin project. All of the initial funding has been obligated, and a report summarizing the Program is being developed. With the additional funding announcement from Reclamation, and potentially additional funding from the other partners, another request for conservation proposals will be released. In order to be utilized to fund the Program, Reclamation's additional contribution must be obligated by September 30 of this year.

### United States, Mexico Continue to Discuss Follow-up to Minute 319

In February, representatives from the United States and Mexico continued to meet to develop a framework for a follow-up agreement to Minute 319 to the United State-Mexico International Water Treaty, which was executed in 2012. While there continues to be many aspects of the agreement that still need to be developed, it is anticipated that "Minute 32X", as it is referred to, will include the following components: (1) a conservation project in Mexico that Metropolitan would be able to partner in; (2) a release of water to the Colorado River Delta following the historic environmental pulse flow of 2014; and (3) rules for Mexico to store water in Lake Mead and for the sharing of surplus and shortage conditions with the United States. The parties have a goal to finalize the agreement by the end of 2016. If an agreement for Minute 32X is reached, the Lower Basin water agencies, including Metropolitan, would need to approve implementing agreements for Minute 32X to be effective.