



## ● 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 March 2017.

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### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### Salton Sea Restoration Related Actions

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) issued the Salton Sea Management Program Phase I: 10 - Year Plan (SSMP) on March 16, 2017

The SSMP was developed at the direction of the Governor's Salton Sea Task Force, created in May 2015, which directed agencies to develop a comprehensive management plan for the Salton Sea that will: (1) meet a short-term goal of implementing 9,000-12,000 acres of habitat and dust suppression projects; and (2) set a medium-term plan to construct 18,000 - 25,000 acres of habitat and dust suppression projects. A 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between the United States Department of the Interior (Interior) and CNRA memorialized these goals and provided a framework for cooperation between the relevant federal and state agencies in SSMP implementation. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and California Air Resources Board will provide oversight on the progress of the SSMP. The SSMP includes a number of "shovel-ready projects," however, there continues to be a funding gap between the cost of these projects and the funds committed to date.

Imperial Irrigation District (IID) Files a Petition with the State Water Board for an Evidentiary Hearing

On March 16,—the same day that CNRA issued the SSMP—IID, Imperial County, and the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (parties) submitted a motion for an evidentiary hearing (motion) to the State Water Board. The parties are seeking a hearing on their 2014 petition asking the State Water Board to modify Revised Order WRO 2002-0013 to give the State Water Board, rather than the CNRA, responsibility for the oversight of Salton Sea restoration.

The State Water Board's Order 2002-0013 authorized the transfer of water from IID to San Diego County Water Authority and required that deliveries of 800,000 acre-feet of Quantified Settlement Agreement Transfer mitigation water be delivered to the Salton Sea from 2003 through 2017. The final deliveries of mitigation water will be made later this year.

In the letter submitted with the motion, the parties described the draft SSMP as "substantial progress toward the roadmap for restoration," but noted that the current SSMP "identifies an unfunded obligation on the part of the state of California in excess of \$300 million over the next decade." The letter contends that the state must make an explicit commitment to "treat" the 28,000 acres of playa expected to be exposed during the next decade and specifically asks for inclusion of renewable energy sources in the SSMP.

The parties are asking the State Water Board to start a hearing no later than July 17, 2017 and issue a decision no later than December 15, 2017. Metropolitan would be a party to the hearing and provide any relevant testimony as appropriate.

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### **Seven Colorado River Basin State Representatives' Message to Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke**

On March 8, the Governors' representatives of the seven Colorado River Basin states sent a letter to recently appointed Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. This letter: (1) seeks Interior's support for the ongoing collaborative efforts regarding Drought Contingency Planning; (2) asks Interior to continue working with Mexico to provide certainty in use of Colorado River water; (3) continue Interior's productive engagement with the basin states; and (4) continue Interior's recognition of the importance of state-driven water management solutions.

Metropolitan staff is actively engaged in the collaborative efforts of the basin states and Interior, including efforts such as development of a Drought Contingency Plan.

### **Bard Pilot Program Enters Its Second Year**

The Bard Seasonal Fallowing Pilot Program (Pilot Program) entered into its second year of fallowing on March 15. This two-year Pilot is testing the water savings potential of a four-month summer fallowing program in the Bard Water District. The 2017 fallowing season was modified at the request of Bard farmers to include two staggered fallowing periods. Instead of fallowing between April 1–July 31, 2017, Bard farmers will be fallowing for a four-month period of either March 15—July 15 or April 15–August 15, 2017 at the choice of the farmer. A total of 1,641 acres are signed up for fallowing in 2017: 752 acres during the first period and 889 acres during the second period. In addition to performing visual field inspections to ensure that fields comply with the terms in the Agreement, Metropolitan staff will be evaluating the use of drone technology for field inspections and will develop a recommendation of the drone's effectiveness at the end of the Pilot Program.