



● Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This Report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River Resources for the month of September 2017.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Modified Intentionally Created Surplus Plan for 2017 Supported by Seven Basin States Representatives

The Governors' representatives of the seven Colorado Basin States sent a letter with concurrence recommendation to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior to modify Metropolitan's Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) plan, as requested by Metropolitan in July 2017. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is expected to approve the modified plan soon.

Metropolitan originally submitted its 2017 ICS plan to create 200,000 acre-feet of Extraordinary Conservation ICS for storage in Lake Mead in June of 2016. Metropolitan's ICS plan was approved by Reclamation on November 30, 2016. In the intervening time, hydrologic conditions in California have gone from the driest period of historical record to the wettest single year. The extraordinary and unprecedented wet conditions of this water year have provided Metropolitan with the unanticipated opportunity to utilize ongoing conservation efforts to create and store additional ICS this year to the benefit of Lake Mead and the Colorado River Basin during an ongoing period of historic drought in the Basin. Metropolitan expects to be able to store 375,000 acre-feet of ICS in Lake Mead in 2017.

Minute No. 323 and Domestic Implementation Agreements Signed

On September 27, 2017, the Commissioners for the United States and Mexico on the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) made the formal exchange of letters for Minute No. 323, thereby making the minute effective. Following Metropolitan's Board authorization, the domestic implementation agreements were signed by September 21, 2017, by all of the parties to those agreements, including Metropolitan.

Minute No. 323 extends the provisions of Minute No. 319 regarding distribution of flows under high and low reservoir elevations, expands Mexico's ability to defer deliveries of its Treaty allotment and store water in the U.S., and continues funding of conservation projects in Mexico by U.S. entities in exchange for a share of the conserved water. In addition, Mexico agreed to implement additional water delivery reductions under a plan referred to as the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan, if and when the United States approves a similar Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan. Mexico would be entitled to recover these deferred deliveries under specified conditions. In consideration for the opportunity to acquire a portion of Mexico's conserved water Metropolitan, Imperial Irrigation District (IID), Central Arizona Water Conservation District, and Southern Nevada Water Authority agreed to reduce the amount of surplus water diverted in equal amounts to offset the amount of water made available to Mexico. Minute No. 323 also includes provisions regarding salinity, measures related to the variability of daily flows arriving in Mexico, the environment, and the possibility of an All-American Canal binational connection. Minute No. 323 addresses issues related to Mexico's Colorado River deliveries and storage from 2017 through 2026.

Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

State Water Resources Control Board Workshop on Proposed Stipulated Order regarding Salton Sea Restoration

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) held an informational public workshop on September 7 in Sacramento to receive information and solicit public input regarding the Salton Sea Management Program and the Draft Stipulated Order. The workshop was for informational purposes and no formal action was taken.

The Draft Stipulated Order, which was developed with input from IID and San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) would modify Order WRO 2002-0013, issued by the SWRCB in 2002. The 2002 Order approved the long term transfer of water from IID to SDCWA and Coachella Valley Water District.

On March 15, 2017, IID submitted a Motion for Evidentiary Hearing to the SWCRB regarding potential modification of WRO 2002-0013. As a result of the motion, a Draft Stipulated Order has been developed for consideration by the SWCRB.

The Order recites the history relevant to the SWCRB's action, then notes that delivery of mitigation water to the sea will end on December 31, 2017, but that mitigation measures identified in IID's EIR on the Water Conservation and Transfer Project, including a four-step air quality plan, will go forward.

The Draft Order provisions that would be added to WRO 2002-0013 include:

- Restoration of a smaller Salton Sea is feasible.
- The State of California will lead and coordinate management efforts and implementation of projects for human health and the environment.
- Establishes restoration milestones to address human health and environmental concerns which set annual targets for habitat and dust-suppression projects on a specified number of acres of exposed playa from 2019 – 2029.
- States that no less than 50 percent of those acres will provide habitat benefits for fish and wildlife.
- Provides that California Natural Resources Agency will develop subsequent 10 year restoration management plans, with stakeholder coordination, beginning no later than midway through the current plan.
- Requires the SWRCB to hold an annual public meeting no later than March 31, 2018 to receive oral and written comments on the status of the Salton Sea Restoration.
- Reserves the SWRCB's jurisdiction to make further amendments to WRO 2002-0013 "to ensure Salton Sea Restoration throughout the term of the QSA through its continuing jurisdiction under this order."

Metropolitan submitted written comments to the SWRCB on September 1, 2017 and provided oral comments at the SWRCB workshop stating Metropolitan's support for the Draft Stipulated Order. The comments requested that any final stipulated order approved by the SWRCB not impose conditions or obligations on Metropolitan, that the order will be declared non-precedential consistent with WRO 2002-0013, and that the letter does not prejudice Metropolitan's continued position as set forth in its protest to the original joint petition resulting in State Water Board WRO 2002-0013 (Revised) that the State Water Board lacks jurisdiction to approve the transfer of Colorado River water. At a later date, the SWRCB may consider a resolution to adopt the Draft Stipulated Order.

Metropolitan's 2018 Bureau of Reclamation Water Order Submitted

Metropolitan submitted its water order to Reclamation for 2018 on September 15, 2017. In this order, Metropolitan estimated that its total available supply of Colorado River water in 2018 would total 995,000 acre-feet of the 1.25 million acre-feet that Metropolitan is capable of diverting and putting to beneficial use. This diversion estimate incorporates Metropolitan's plan to create up to 390,000 acre-feet of Extraordinary Conservation ICS. As the year progresses, Metropolitan will determine how much of this water to store in Lake Mead or, in the event of a dry year, recover from the ICS account.