



● 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 December 2019.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Amendment to Agreements with Desert Water Agency and Coachella Valley Water District

Following Board approval at the December Board meeting, on December 11, Metropolitan built on an existing partnership with Desert Water Agency and Coachella Valley Water District by signing the amendment to agreements for the exchange and delivery of water. This comprehensive set of amendments updates existing agreements and will provide greater certainty for water supply and financial planning, simplify program implementation, and improve dry-year water supply reliability. The partnership was recognized in Las Vegas where the agreements were signed by the agency General Managers and attorneys.

Bard Water District Seasonal Fallowing Agreement

Following Board approval at the December Board meeting, on December 20, a landmark, seven-year seasonal land fallowing agreement to conserve Colorado River water to benefit California cities and farms was signed by Metropolitan and Bard Water District. Under this agreement, Bard farmers will forgo planting lower-value, water-intensive crops during spring and summer, receiving a payment of \$452 for each acre fallowed for the season (escalated annually). A portion of this payment will be used by Bard Water District to make needed system improvements. This seasonal fallowing will reduce water consumption in Bard, making more Colorado River water available for Metropolitan to divert or store in Lake Mead. Metropolitan estimates a water savings of 2.0 acre-feet per irrigable acre. Participating farmers will reduce their water consumption through land fallowing of up to 3,000 acres annually between the months of April and July.

Regional Recycled Water – Potential Partnership

In December, staff of Metropolitan and the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) shared information with their respective board and advisory meetings about a potential future partnership on Metropolitan's Regional Recycled Water Program. At Metropolitan's Engineering and Operations Committee in December, the possibility of a Letter of Intent between Metropolitan and SNWA was discussed, followed by a meeting at which SNWA described the potential Letter of Intent with its Integrated Resource Planning Advisory Committee 2020. Staff will keep the Board apprised of discussion between our two agencies on this matter.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Paradox Valley Salinity Control Project Released

On December 6, the Bureau of Reclamation issued a draft EIS for the Paradox Valley Unit of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. The draft EIS analyzes alternatives for replacing an aging well in the Paradox Valley that captures and prevents about 100,000 tons of salt from reaching the Colorado River each year. Four alternatives were analyzed in the draft EIS: (1) a no-action alternative; (2) a replacement injection well; (3) construction of evaporation ponds; and (4) construction of a zero liquid discharge facility to capture brine. Metropolitan staff is working with the other Colorado River Basin states to evaluate the four alternatives and develop feedback by the comment deadline of February 4, 2020. Metropolitan will discuss the draft EIS at the January Water Planning and Stewardship Committee Meeting.