



● 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 2022.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

2007 Interim Guidelines Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) published a notice of intent (NOI) to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the 2007 Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The deadline to provide public comments on the scope of the SEIS was December 20. Metropolitan submitted a comment letter and joined a comment letter with Southern Nevada Water Authority and Central Arizona Water Conservation District. Metropolitan's letter requested that the preferred alternative protect stored Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS); provide for public health, safety, and welfare storage and deliveries; and apply any reductions in water deliveries needed to protect dam infrastructure at Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam equitably on all users of Colorado River water, if reductions become necessary. Metropolitan's letter also indicated that the preferred alternative should include Upper Division State actions that help to assure sufficient water gets to Lake Powell to protect infrastructure safety, and water deliveries and hydropower generation. Those actions may include a combination of releases from Colorado River Storage Project Act units and conservation in the Upper Basin.

The NOI anticipates three primary alternatives will be considered. The No Action Alternative, Reservoir Operations Modification Alternative to be developed by Reclamation as a set of actions and measures adopted pursuant to Secretarial authority under applicable federal law, and the Framework Agreement Alternative. The Framework Agreement Alternative would be a consensus-based set of actions that builds on the existing framework for Colorado River Operations, including commitments included in the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan (DCP). Metropolitan supports the development of the Framework Agreement Alternative. If successful, a consensus-based alternative would build on the approach the Colorado River Basin States took in developing the alternative that became the basis for the 2007 Interim Guidelines Record of Decision and more recently when the Basin States, Tribes and Section 5 Contractors in California worked together to develop the DCP. Metropolitan staff will work with the Basin State representatives during January 2023 to develop the Framework Agreement Alternative. The NOI anticipates a draft SEIS will be available for public review in Spring 2023 and that the final SEIS is anticipated to be available with a Record of Decision in late Summer 2023.

Colorado River Water Users Association Annual Conference

With a sold-out venue, the much-anticipated Colorado River Water Users Association held its annual conference in Las Vegas during December 14-16. Most of the speakers at the conference highlighted ongoing dry conditions facing the Colorado River Basin and emphasized the need for increased conservation to protect Lake Powell and Lake Mead. A lot of discussion and information was shared regarding Reclamation's NOI to Prepare an SEIS for the 2007 Interim Guidelines throughout the three-day event. Metropolitan's Colorado River Resources Policy Manager, Shanti Rosset, joined others on a panel and showcased Pure Water Southern California as an option for collaborative solutions. Staff also met with various partners such as other members and staff from the Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, Palo Verde Irrigation District, Gila River Indian Community, Quechan Tribe, and representatives from Mexico.

Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

Metropolitan Submits Revised Colorado River Water Order

In December, Metropolitan submitted a revised water order for 2022 requesting delivery of up to 90,000 acre-feet of ICS to keep the Colorado River Aqueduct full through the end of the year. The delivery of ICS will be deducted from Metropolitan's beginning of the year balance of 1.27 million acre-feet of ICS stored in Lake Mead. In its revised water order, Metropolitan also agreed to forebear water conserved by Coachella Valley Water District as part of the 500 Plus Plan to add additional water to Lake Mead this year.