



One Water and Stewardship Committee

Expansion of the Bard Seasonal Following Program and Amendment to the System Conservation Implementation Agreement for Bard Seasonal Following Program

Item 7-6

February 10, 2025

Authorize Expansion of the Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program

Subject

Authorize the General Manager to expand the Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program and amend the System Conservation Implementation Agreement for Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program to increase its program size from 3,000 acres to 6,000 acres for the years 2025 and 2026.

Purpose

To obtain board approval for expansion of the Bard Program and an amendment to the System Conservation Implementation Agreement for the Bard Program.

Recommendation and Fiscal Impact

Authorize the expansion of the Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program and authorize amending the System Conservation Implementation Agreement for Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program to increase its program size from 3,000 acres to 6,000 acres for the years 2025 and 2026. Metropolitan would not pay for the additional land fallowing during the term of the System Conservation Implementation Agreement. Metropolitan would also receive approximately \$120,000 for Bard administrative fees through 2026.

Budget

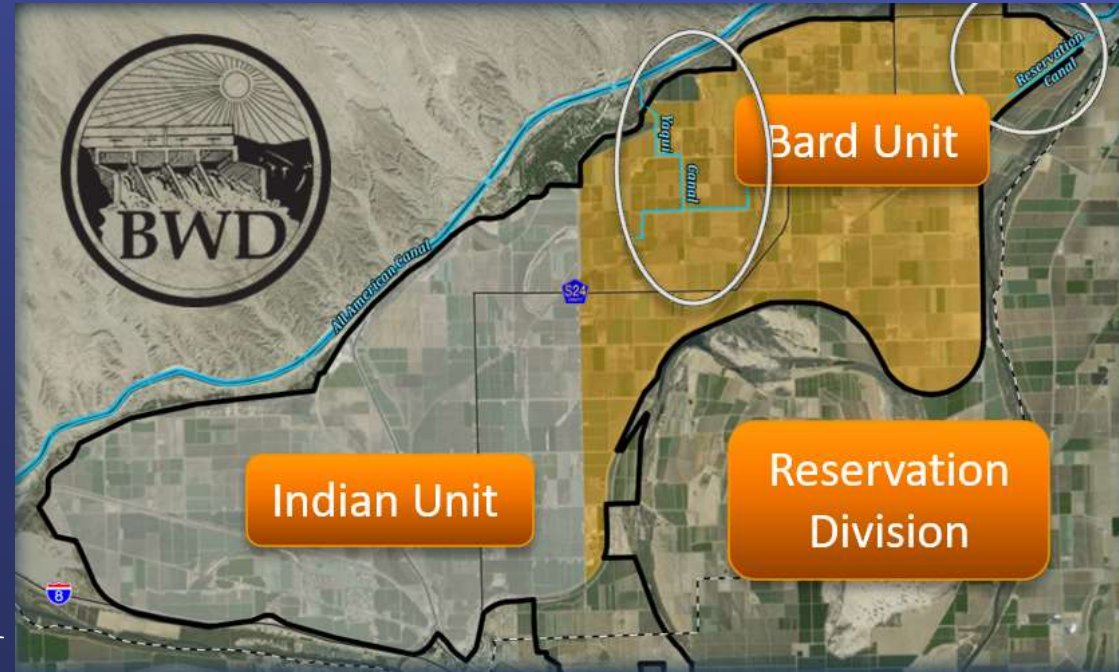
Not budgeted. US Bureau of Reclamation would fund the additional land fallowing at no cost to Metropolitan.

Bard Water District Background



Bard Water District Background

- Part of the Reservation Division of the Yuma Project
- Diverts water from All-American Canal



- Approximately 7,000 Irrigated Acres
- High value vegetables grown in winter
- Lower-value, water-intensive grasses grown in summer

Bard Seasonal Following Program



- Board approved in 2019
- Program active from 2020-2026

Program size	3,000 acres/year
Following Season	April – June
Incentive Rate	\$452/acre/year

*Verifications are made prior to providing funding

*Rate is escalated annually

Bard Program Benefits



- Water supply reliability
- Financial benefits to farmers and improvements to Bard
- Water savings of up to 6,000 AF per year



To date:

- Water savings: 51,000 AF
- Funding provided: \$6.27M

Expand Bard Program size from
3,000 acres to 6,000 acres

Proposed Bard Program Expansion



Why We Want to Expand the Bard Program

- Increased reliability for Metropolitan when needed
- Bard farmers have expressed interest in increasing fallowing
 - Bard has the capacity to fallow more
- Bard uses funding for relining their canals and other district improvements
 - Benefits all within Bard

Terms of the System Conservation Implementation Agreement (SCIA)

September 2024: Metropolitan and Bard entered into SCIA with USBR

- USBR funds the fallowing of up to 3,000 acres per year
- Metropolitan administers the program
- Water conserved is left in Lake Mead

USBR Payment: \$760 per acre

- \$720 for Bard
 - 75% for farmers
 - 25% for Bard Unit
- \$40 for Metropolitan (admin costs)

Proposed Amendment to SCIA



- USBR will fund additional fallowing
- Metropolitan will forebear water conserved in 2025
 - No additional cost to Metropolitan
 - Collect administration costs
- Metropolitan will have the option to divert a portion of water conserved in 2026
 - Metropolitan would provide funding in the amounts consistent with the existing Bard Program

Proposed Amendment to SCIA



	Existing SCIA	Proposed SCIA
Max Annual Fallowing	3,000 acres/year	6,000 acres/year
Annual Water Savings	5,700 AF	11,400 AF

All other provisions of SCIA would remain the same.

Summary

Benefits of expanding the Bard Program and amending the SCIA:

- Enhanced reliability for Metropolitan if additional water needed in 2026
- Additional financial benefit to farmers and Bard
- Additional Colorado River system water for Lake Mead

Board Options

- Option #1

Authorize the General Manager to expand the Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program and amend the System Conservation Implementation Agreement for Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program to increase its program size from 3,000 acres to 6,000 acres for the years 2025 and 2026.

- Option #2

Do not authorize the expansion of the Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program.

Staff Recommendation

- Option #1

