



● 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 February 2023.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Metropolitan Advocates for Colorado River Solutions in Washington, D.C.

Between February 27 and March 1, Metropolitan board and staff members met with members of Congress and congressional aides, along with leadership in the Department of the Interior, to assist in providing funding and tools to help water users permanently reduce their diversions from the Colorado River. They highlighted the investments Metropolitan, San Diego County Water Authority, and the state of California have made to reduce California's water demands from the Colorado River, and how those investments could be impacted by the proposal submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) by the other six Colorado River Basin States. They also discussed the benefits to the Colorado River of providing funding for Pure Water Southern California and various projects in Northern California that can increase water supply reliability to our region. California showed its solidarity by crafting Colorado River solutions through the letter from the Colorado River Board agencies, including Metropolitan, to Secretary of the Department of Human Health Services Xavier Becerra, highlighting the potential impacts of water supply cuts to disadvantaged communities throughout Southern California. The agencies have asked for a meeting with the Secretary during a future visit to Washington, D.C.

Salinity Control Forum Updates

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum Work Group meeting in February included updates on the status of the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU), the largest single salinity control project in the Colorado River Basin. Reclamation recently completed a six-month test of PVU at two-thirds of its full injection capacity, approximately 65,000 tons of salt control per year. Post-test analysis showed normal pressure levels in the well and no evidence of abnormal seismicity during the test. Based on the test results and analysis, Reclamation has decided to operate the well at two-thirds capacity in consecutive six-month tests until a seismic risk analysis is completed in late 2023. Reclamation continues to work with the Colorado River Basin States to develop a long-term alternative to replace PVU once it is no longer operable. Reclamation's short-term model projections show a slight decrease in Lower Colorado River salinity over the next year or two. The Forum Work Group also received updates regarding modeling assumptions and text for the 2023 Review of Water Quality Standards for Salinity in the Colorado River System. Metropolitan staff participated in this meeting.

Four Tribes Request for Development of Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Alternative

The Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Quechan Tribe, and the Cocopah Tribe submitted a joint letter requesting that Reclamation develop an alternative for the 2007 Interim Guidelines Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) based on principles and modeling assumptions described in the letter. Principles included that reduction to tribal water allocations and use must be voluntary and compensated, and that Lower Basin system losses must be assessed according to existing contract provisions and new regulations, if adopted after public review and comment. The letter identified several assumptions to be evaluated in Lower Basin modeling including the impact of converting compensated conservation that Reclamation is funding into Intentionally Created Surplus to be used as a Protection Volume and maintaining flow below Hoover Dam for the Colorado to be a living river through all reaches.