

Minutes of Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, March 12, 2014

A Meeting of the Colorado River Board of California was held at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, MWD Headquarters Building, Board Room, 700 N. Alameda, Los Angeles, CA 92225, Wednesday, March 12, 2014.

Board Members and Alternates Present

Dana Bart Fisher, Jr., Chairman  
Stephen Benson  
Henry Kuiper  
Glen D. Peterson  
David Pettijohn

John Powell, Jr.  
Doug Wilson  
Jeanine Jones, Designee  
Department of Water Resources

Board Members and Alternates Absent

Franz De Klotz  
John V. Foley  
Terese M. Ghio  
James Hanks  
James B. McDaniel

Bud Pocklington  
Christopher G. Hayes, Designee  
Department of Fish & Wildlife

Others Present

Steve Abbott  
Tim Blair  
Brenda Burman  
John Carter  
J.C. Jay Chen  
Robert Cheng  
Dan Denham  
Matt Dessert  
Bill Hasencamp  
Mark Horne  
Michael Hughes  
Lisa Johansen  
Lori Jones  
Laura Landon  
Tom Levy

Kara Mathews  
Karen Murphy  
Autumn Plourd  
Angela Rashid  
Harry Ruzgerian  
Tom Ryan  
John Scott  
Jack Seiler  
Tina Shields  
Peter Silva  
Ed Smith  
Joanna Smith  
Mark Stuart  
Tanya Trujillo  
Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Fisher announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Chairman Fisher asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board. Hearing none, Chairman Fisher moved to the next agenda item.

Board Member Glen Peterson welcomed the Board to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### Approval of Minutes of the February 12, 2014 Colorado River Board Meeting

Chairman Fisher asked if there was a motion to approve the February 12, 2014 minutes. Mr. Kuiper moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Benson, and unanimously carried, the February 12, 2014, meeting minutes were approved.

### Announcements

Executive Director Ms. Trujillo reported that on February 27, 2014, the U.S. Senate confirmed Mr. Mike Connor as Deputy Secretary for the Department of the Interior (Interior).

Ms. Trujillo reported that on March 6, 2014, the President nominated Mr. Estevan Lopez, the Director of New Mexico's Interstate Stream Commission, to be the new Commissioner of Reclamation. A hearing will be held before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Senate confirmation process could take several months. The Board will likely present a letter of support on behalf of Mr. Lopez at the appropriate time. Ms. Trujillo reported that, in the interim, Mr. Lowell Pimley will serve as the acting Commissioner of Reclamation.

Ms. Trujillo reported that on March 3, 2014, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, Ms. Anne Castle visited Los Angeles and met with representatives of the Colorado River Board regarding drought conditions. Ms. Trujillo also reported that Secretary Jewell visited Los Angeles and was in the Central Valley on March 11, 2014 visiting the pumping facilities associated with the water projects and discussing the drought situation.

Ms. Trujillo also reported that on March 4, 2014, the President released the

federal Budget for Fiscal-Year 2015. The President is requesting approximately \$1 billion for water related issues in the Western United States. The Budget includes a new element called, “The Drought Response Program”, and includes \$1.5 million to implement this program. Ms. Trujillo reported that the Lower Colorado River operations portion of the budget was about \$28 million and the Salinity Control Project was \$23 million. The 2014 Budget was not approved until January, and it is not clear how quickly this Budget will move forward.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORT AND CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE**

### **Colorado River Basin Water Report**

Ms. Trujillo presented the March Water Report for the Colorado River Basin. She reported that Lake Powell was at thirty-nine percent of capacity, and that Lake Mead was currently at forty-eight percent of capacity. The total storage in the System reservoir facilities is at forty-eight percent of capacity. Ms. Trujillo reported that the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center snowpack conditions throughout much of the Upper Basin are currently about 115 percent of average. She reported that Reclamation is currently projecting that the unregulated inflow into Lake Powell will be approximately 10.9 million acre-feet, or just about 101 percent of average. Ms. Trujillo also reported that much of the western United States, and particularly in the southwestern region, is still experiencing drought conditions, with the epicenter of the drought still being in California.

### **State and Local Agency Reports**

Mr. Mark Stuart, of the Department of Water Resources Southern District, reported that even with the recent rains in the southern California region, the area remains well below normal in annual precipitation and ranges from 14 percent of average to just below 50 percent of average. Mr. Stuart also reported that the snowpack in much of the Sierra Nevada is still only about 50 percent of normal. He also reported that system storage in the State Water Project was currently at 40 percent of capacity, and even with the recent precipitation across much of California, the water supply situation remains dire.

Jeanine Jones, of the Department of Water Resources, reported that California Governor Jerry Brown recently signed legislation accelerating appropriations for several important conservation and drought mitigation programs associated with water supply and water resources management and wildland firefighting.

Board member, Mr. Glen Peterson, of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, provided a quick overview of the status of the MWD system, with just 800,000 acre-feet in storage. Mr. Peterson also reported that MWD deliveries, to date, are about 115 percent of the annual average. Mr. Peterson noted that the MWD

Board approved a \$20 million increase for conservation this year and approved a \$5 million outreach campaign.

Board member, Mr. David Pettijohn, of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, reported that recent snowpack conditions in the Mammoth Pass region have improved somewhat and are currently at 44 percent of normal. He reported that LADWP expects to receive approximately 70,000-80,000 acre-feet from the Los Angeles Aqueduct system this year.

Board member Ms. Jones also added some information about the combined and coordinated federal and state operations associated with the Bay-Delta, particularly in light of the on-going drought and the continuing efforts to develop a long-term environmental management plan for the Delta fisheries. She reported that the State Water Resources Control Board has adopted revised water quality standards for the Delta that more accurately reflect a hydrology which is much drier than originally envisioned when the standards were first developed. In order to maintain water quality standards, it has necessitated releases from upstream reservoirs, and has significantly curtailed deliveries to contract holders. Ms. Jones also reported that DWR has been working on the development of long-term streamflow reconstructions for the Sacramento/San Joaquin River systems to develop a better understanding of the long-term natural variables in the system.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAM REPORTS**

### **Status of the Colorado River Basin Water Supply & Demand Study**

Ms. Trujillo reported that the data collection process for the Basin Study Work Groups is nearly complete. The Environmental Flows Work Group selected three focus reaches for further analysis and study, which include the main stem of the Colorado in the Grand Junction area of Colorado, the White River in Utah, and the Bill Williams River in the Lower Colorado River Basin in Arizona. The M&I Work Group completed its data collection effort and has begun developing case studies of effective conservation and re-use programs in both the Upper and Lower Basin. The Agricultural Conservation Work Group has developed sub-teams to investigate Consumptive Use Reductions, On-Farm Efficiencies, and Conveyance System Efficiency Improvements and Transfers activities in the Basin. It is anticipated that the first draft of the Phase 1 reports will be completed in April.

### **Report on Minute 319 Implementation**

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Environmental Flows component of Minute 319 which consists of the Pulse Flow will start on March 23, 2014 and will go through the first week in April to simulate what might be a natural spring peak runoff. A ceremony hosted by the Mexican government/CILA is planned for March 27, 2014 at Morelos Dam

located at the confluence or at the border of Mexico. The next step will be development of a monitoring plan to analyze the Pulse Flow and its effect on the ecosystem and the riparian areas. Ms. Trujillo reported that the Delivery Plan describes a specific plan and progress will be tracked on some of the existing habitat. Ms. Trujillo reported that the Pulse Flow is approximately 105,000 acre-feet of Mexico's water to be used in Mexico that is currently stored by Mexico in Lake Mead. One of the provisions in an earlier Minute allowed Mexico to defer delivery of water that it couldn't use on an annual basis. Ms. Trujillo reported that through Minute 319, the U.S. and local agencies will be funding conservation projects in Mexico that will go towards projects that will create water savings, which Mexico may decide to use toward Environmental Flow components. A significant amount of media coverage is anticipated for the Pulse Flow event.

Additionally, Ms. Trujillo reported that this is a high priority for non-governmental organizations (NGO), both in the U.S. and in Mexico. The NGOs are campaigning and fund-raising in connection with the event because they have an obligation under the agreement to raise money to acquire water rights that will create the Base Flow component of the experiment. After the Pulse Flow this spring, water will be released under Mexico's apportionment to support the habitat that is created after this event.

In response to Mr. Fisher's question about what the expectations are for the Pulse Flow, Ms. Trujillo stated that it is an experiment and that the water from the Pulse Flow may sink into the ground and may not flow all the way to through the Delta. It is not anticipated that the flow will make its way to the sea. However, additional significant rain events between now and then would make a difference in soil saturation, which in turn would convey more water south. Additionally, Ms. Trujillo commented that this is a Mexican initiated project and that the U.S. will not be involved in directing Mexico on how to utilize their water in terms of agricultural, municipal, and environmental needs.

#### Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Salinity Control Program's Work Group met on February 26-28, 2014. They focused on the Triennial Review Report, which is the process to determine whether they're going to change any of the salinity standards that have been set every three years. It is anticipated that those standards will not change, and that the report will maintain the current levels.

Additionally, Ms. Trujillo reported that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) re-ran its experiment at the Pah Tempe Springs that was previously canceled as a result of heavy rains that had washed out their gauges on their first attempt. After the data is collected, the USGS will determine if it would be feasible to implement a project to control salinity discharges at the site. Ms. Trujillo also reported that the Paradox EIS has continued to be under development. Alternatives are being considered to the current disposal well, which has been in existence beyond its predicted useful life and it would be

problematic if it were to fail in the next few years. Reclamation is the lead agency on the EIS, and we are one of the cooperating agencies working with them.

Ms. Trujillo reported that the funding sub-committee is working on funding shortfall issues associated with the Lower Basin's contributions to the non-federal cost share of the program. The non-federal entities support a 30 percent cost share for the program. The Lower Basin supports 85 percent of the non-federal cost share, which is funded entirely from the Lower Basin Fund (comprised of power revenues) managed by Reclamation. The statute that authorizes the program locks in those cost shares and percentages. Ms. Trujillo also reported that because of decreased water levels and decreased income into the Basin Fund, the states have not been able to match the level of appropriations that have been coming in from Reclamation with our non-federal cost shares. Ms. Trujillo reported that this is an inadvertent situation because of the statutory language. The next funding sub-committee meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2014.

Finally, Ms. Trujillo reported that in 2014, for the salinity program, Reclamation anticipates receiving approximately \$10 million, Bureau of Land Management anticipates receiving \$750,000, and the Department of Agriculture anticipates receiving \$12 million through the EQIP Program. The next Salinity Control Forum meeting is scheduled for June 12-13, 2014 in Wyoming.

#### Glen Canyon Dam—Long-Term Experimental Management Plan EIS Process

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Adaptive Management Work Group, the federal advisory committee associated with operation of Glen Canyon Dam and the Grand Canyon, met in Phoenix, Arizona on February 19-20, 2014. Reclamation is projecting a release of 9.0 million acre-feet from Lake Powell in 2015 to the Lower Basin. In contrast, the release in 2014 is 7.48 million acre-feet, which is the lowest release since the reservoirs have been in place. Ms. Trujillo reported that typically a release is 8.23 million acre-feet.

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Adaptive Management Work Group included a panel discussion on the effects of the drought on Colorado River operations. Additionally, the Grand Canyon Research Center presented their initial results from the High Flow experiment conducted in November 2013 to redistribute sediment from the Upper Reaches of the river to farther downstream.

Finally, Ms. Trujillo reported that Interior and the other Basin States continue to work on development of the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) EIS program. The modeling of the LTEMP EIS alternatives has been very extensive and Reclamation anticipates initial modeling results to be presented during the week of March 17, 2014. Ms. Trujillo reported that a "Structured Decision Analysis" workshop is scheduled for March 31 and April 1, 2014.

### Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Trujillo reported that the Technical Work Group meeting was held on March 12, 2014 in Yuma, Arizona and a tour of the Laguna Habitat Conservation Area was held on March 13, 2014. The next Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2014.

### Next Board Meeting

Chairman Fisher announced that there is no executive session today and that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board will be held on Wednesday, April 9, 2014, at Imperial Irrigation District in El Centro, California.

There being no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon the motion of Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Wilson, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 2:28 p.m. on March 12, 2014.