

Minutes of Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, January 9, 2019

A meeting of the Colorado River Board (Board) of California was held on Wednesday, January 9, 2019.

Committee Members and Alternates Present

Evelyn Cortez-Davis (LADWP Alternate)  
David De Jesus (MWD Alternate)  
James Hanks (IID)  
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)  
Hank Kuiper (Public Member)

Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)  
Glen D. Peterson (MWD)  
David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)  
Mark Watton (SDCWA Alternate)

Committee Members and Alternates Absent

Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)  
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)  
Nicole Neeman-Brady (Public Member)  
John Powell, Jr. (CVWD Alternate)

Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)  
Norma Sierra Galindo (IID Alternate)  
David Vigil (DFW Alternate)  
Doug Wilson (SDCWA)

Others Present

Steve Abbott  
Melissa Baum-Haley  
Robert Cheng  
Elsa Contreras  
Christopher Harris  
Bill Hasencamp  
Joanna Hoff  
Michael Hughes  
Ned Hyduke  
Laura Lamdin  
Tom Levy  
Henry Martinez

Henry Martinez  
Kara Mathews  
Cris Morris  
Jessica Neuwerth  
Ivory Reyburn  
Shanti Rosset  
Tom Ryan  
Tina Shields  
Alina Tishchenko  
Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nelson announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

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

Chairman Nelson invited members of the audience to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board.

Ms. Tina Shields introduced Mr. Henry Martinez as the new General Manager for the Imperial Irrigation District.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the December 12, 2018 meeting minutes. Mr. Hanks moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Pettijohn. By roll-call vote the minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Harris indicated that per new Rules and Regulations of the Colorado River Board of California, Election of Officers will occur during the February 13<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS**

### **Colorado River Basin Report**

Mr. Harris reported that as of January 7<sup>th</sup>, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,580.33 feet, just under 10 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 41% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,082.21 feet with 10.20 MAF of storage, or 39% of capacity. The total system storage was 26.99 MAF, or 45% of capacity, which is about 5 MAF less than the system storage at this time last year.

Mr. Harris reported that as of January 7<sup>th</sup>, the forecasted Lake Powell inflow for Water Year 2019 is 6.98 MAF (64% of normal). The forecasted April to July 2019 runoff into Lake Powell is 4.55 MAF (63% of normal). The December 2018 observed inflow and January 2019 inflow forecast into Lake Powell are 0.23 MAF (63% of normal) and 0.24 MAF (65% of normal). The WY-2019 precipitation to date is 95% of normal and current Basin snowpack is 87% of normal.

Mr. Harris reported that in December, precipitation conditions were average throughout

the Basin. A couple of storms moved through in early December but the rest of the month was dry. The Snow Water Equivalent data showed that the Upper Green, Yampa, Duchesne, and the Upper Colorado were doing well, while the southern portion of the Upper Basin was drier. Mr. Harris reported that, besides the large mainstem reservoirs, the rest of the reservoirs in both Upper and Lower Colorado River Basins remained in average condition for this time of the year.

Mr. Harris reported that as of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, Brock and Senator Wash Reservoirs had captured 1,635 AF and 1,823 AF, respectively. The provisional storage values for last calendar year for Brock and Senator Wash Reservoirs are 159,835 AF and 76,066, respectively. He also reported that excess deliveries to Mexico through January 7<sup>th</sup> were 304 AF, and only 7,035 AF of excess flows to Mexico were delivered last calendar year. Mr. Harris reported that the bypass flows to the Cienega typically average around 120,000 AF and last year was 102,089 AF. He commended Reclamation's Yuma Area Office for the reduction of the bypass and excess flows.

### **State and Local Report**

Mr. Harris reported that exceptional drought conditions continue to persist in the Four Corners Region. Mr. Harris also reported that the Secretary of Interior has not yet approved the 2019 Annual Operating Plan (AOP). The final draft is still posted on Reclamation's website. He added that he does not anticipate any changes to the existing proposed 2019 AOP. In response to Board members' questions, Mr. Harris reported that the delay is probably due in part to the federal government shutdown, as well as the recent departure of Secretary Zinke.

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported that at this time it is too early to say what the water year is going to be like. The statewide snowpack is at 85% of average. With an active weather pattern for the next five to seven days, precipitation amounts are starting to catch up but remain below average. Ms. Jones reported that the State's reservoir system is tracking a little bit below average because of the dry winter. She reported that on January 7<sup>th</sup>, despite the shutdown, Congress reauthorized the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Act and the Weather Research Act of 2017, which directs the weather service to direct resources to much needed research on subseasonal forecasting. She added that Mr. Frank Gehrke has retired and Mr. John King has been doing the public snow surveys in his place.

Mr. Peterson, representing the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that MWD reservoir storage is at 85% of capacity. He also reported that operating on a six-pump flow will allow MWD to take 200,000 AF out of ICS this year in case there is no DCP.

Mr. Pettijohn, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, reported that the last couple of storms have improved the Eastern Sierra snowpack, but it is still too early to tell how much runoff would be available for the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

## **STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS**

### **Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan**

Mr. Harris reported that the agencies in Arizona, California, and Nevada all continue to work to finalize the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan (DCP). Mr. Harris noted that the agreements necessary to implement the DCP include a Basin States/United States Companion Agreement, Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan agreement and operational exhibit, and intrastate and interagency agreements, such as the ICS-Sharing Agreement and California ICS Agreement. Also under consideration are a number of proposed new ICS exhibits to the 2007 Forbearance Agreement.

Mr. Harris reported that Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Burman had set the Basin States a January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline for completion of the DCP. Commissioner Burman also noted that on February 1<sup>st</sup>, without a completed DCP, a federal register notice would be published, inviting recommendations on how the federal government should manage the reservoir system. Mr. Harris reported that stakeholders in Arizona were working diligently to meet the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline and were continuing to develop agreements to implement the DCP within the state. Mr. Harris noted that a number of Arizona's proposed draft agreements and ICS exhibits were made available online for public review.

Mr. Harris reported that Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) staff would be working with the agencies proposing ICS exhibits to ensure their consistency with the 2007 Guidelines. Within California, new ICS exhibits are proposed by the Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, and Metropolitan Water District. The only proposed ICS exhibit for Nevada comes from the Southern Nevada Water Authority and has been publicly available for several months. Mr. Harris noted that Reclamation intended to work individually with agencies regarding new ICS exhibits and encouraged parties within each state to reach consensus on a state package of ICS exhibits.

Mr. Harris noted that in order to activate Section IV of Minute 323, which initiates Mexican drought contingency planning, by the August 2019 determination, the DCP must be completed and approved by no later than mid-April.

Mr. Harris reported that some minor modifications are expected to the Lower Basin DCP agreement as a result of negotiations to resolve issues with the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) and Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). Changes to those agreements would be circulated as soon as possible. Ms. Shanti Rosset, with the Metropolitan Water District, noted that the small drafting group of Basin States representatives would be involved in that process. She also reiterated that, although Reclamation was an important

partner in developing and finalizing the proposed new ICS agreements, the process of creating and approving these exhibits is state-driven.

### **Minute No. 323 Implementation**

Mr. Harris reported that the Environmental Work Group for Minute 323 would be meeting January 23-24 in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, to finalize their 2019 plans for restoration, monitoring, and water delivery.

### **Status of the Salinity Control Forum**

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation informed the states that the finalization of the Paradox Valley Unit EIS is pushed out three to six months because BLM has requested Reclamation to include in the EIS additional information related to visual, cultural, and air quality resources. The Record of Decision for the EIS is still scheduled for release in the summer or fall of 2020. The Work Group will be meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup> through 22<sup>nd</sup> in Phoenix, Arizona, and the Forum and Advisory Council will be in Denver in the spring for its 100th meeting.

### **Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program**

Mr. Harris reported that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program's Technical Work Group (TWG) would meet in mid-February, in conjunction with the group's Annual Reporting Meeting. At this meeting, the group would review the past year's accomplishments, research, and monitoring, including results from any recent experimental activities such as the November 2018 High Flow Experiment (HFE). Mr. Harris noted that the full Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) is scheduled to meet in early March.

### **Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program**

Mr. Harris reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) had scheduled its annual Colorado River Terrestrial and Riparian meeting for January 29-31. The LCR MSCP will also conduct a financial work group call on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Harris reported that with the adjournment of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress and the commencement of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress on Thursday, January 3rd, the federal government remains in a partial shutdown. The House has proposed two separate bills - one to reopen eight departments including the EPA and the Department of the Interior through September 2019, another to reopen the Department of Homeland Security through February 8<sup>th</sup>. The Administration has not signaled support for either proposal without border wall funding.

Mr. Harris reported that California Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi was elected to be Speaker of the House of Representatives; California Congressman Kevin McCarthy will assume his new role as House Minority Leader and Senator Mitch McConnell will continue his tenure as Majority Leader in the Senate, as will Senator Chuck Schumer as minority leader. Furthermore, energy, infrastructure and climate issues are expected to be a focus in the House this Congress.

Mr. Harris reported that Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke resigned at the end of the year, and Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt is the Acting Secretary of the Interior. Replacements could include Acting Secretary Bernhardt, former Nevada Senator Dean Heller, former California Congressman Jeff Denham or others.

Ms. Jones noted that the Board Packet includes the flyer for an event associated with the Groundwater Resources Association on forecasting groundwater recharge. The event will examine how recent changes, such as the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), may facilitate more groundwater recharge projects that were previously considered infeasible.

Finally, Mr. Harris noted that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board would be February 13<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m.