

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, March 13, 2019

A meeting of the Colorado River Board (Board) of California was held on Wednesday, March 13, 2019.

Board Members and Alternates Present

Evelyn Cortez-Davis (LADWP Alternate)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)
James Hanks (IID)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)
Hank Kuiper (Public Member)
Nicole Neeman-Brady (Public Member)

Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)
Glen D. Peterson (MWD)
Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)
David Vigil (DFW Alternate)
Mark Watton (SDCWA Alternate)
Doug Wilson (SDCWA)

Board Members and Alternates Absent

David De Jesus (MWD Alternate)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)
David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)

John Powell, Jr. (CVWD Alternate)
Norma Sierra Galindo (IID Alternate)

Others Present

Steve Abbott
Brian Alvarez
Melissa Baum-Haley
Robert Cheng
Elsa Contreras
Christopher Harris
Bill Hasencamp
Tom Havens
Michael Hughes
Ned Hyduke
Lisa Johansen
Eric Katz
Laura Lamdin

Lindia Liu
Henry Martinez
Kara Mathews
Doug McPherson
Jessica Neuwerth
Ivory Reyburn
Kelly Rodgers
Shanti Rosset
Angela Rashid
Tom Ryan
Tina Shields
Alina Tishchenko
Cherie Watte

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nelson announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:27 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. Mr. Tom Havens from American Water Resources and an Imperial Irrigation District resident brought up several concerns. His concerns included IID involvement in the DCP, the Salton Sea, and the composition of the small working group.

ADMINISTRATION

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the February 13, 2019 meeting minutes. Mr. Hanks moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Kuiper. By roll-call vote the minutes were unanimously approved.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS

Colorado River Basin Report

Ms. Rashid reported that as February 4th, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,571.54 feet with 9.23 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 38% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,088.20 feet 10.70 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 41% of capacity. As of February 4th, total system storage was 26.72 MAF, or 45% of capacity, which is about 4.82 MAF less than system storage at this same time last year.

Ms. Rashid reported the forecasted Water Year-2019 inflow into Lake Powell is 9.75 MAF, or 90% of normal. The Forecasted April – July 2019 inflow into Lake Powell is 7.30 MAF, or 102% of normal. She noted that both forecasts have increased by nearly 2 MAF due to the recent storm activity. For Water Year-2019, the February observed inflow and March forecasted inflow into Lake Powell is 0.26 MAF (65% of normal) and 0.46 MAF (69% of normal), respectively. To date, the WY-2019 precipitation is 117% of normal and the current basin snowpack is 123% of normal.

Ms. Rashid reported on the precipitation conditions in January were above average for most of the Basin, with exception to dry conditions in areas of southern Arizona. In February, precipitation conditions throughout the Basin were above average, with many areas receiving over 300% of average precipitation.

Ms. Rashid reported that as of March 4th, the Upper Colorado River basin reservoirs, excluding Lake Powell, ranged from 34% of capacity at Fontenelle Reservoir in Wyoming; 84%

of capacity at Flaming Gorge Reservoir in Wyoming and Utah; 92% of capacity at Morrow Point and 30% of capacity at Blue Mesa Reservoirs in Colorado; and 51% of capacity at Navajo Reservoir in New Mexico.

Ms. Rashid reported that as of February 28th, Brock and Senator Wash Reservoirs captured 23,004 AF and 22,852 AF, respectively. She also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico through March 3rd were 866 AF. As of March 2nd, the total bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 14,527 AF.

State and Local Report

Ms. Rashid reported that while drought conditions in California have been alleviated, severe and exceptional drought conditions continue to plague the Four Corners region. Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources, reported that February was one of the wettest Februarys on record and precipitation conditions in early March were also wet. She stated that precipitation throughout the State is above average, with only a small area of the central coast still experiencing dry conditions. She noted that this area has only recently begun to recover from the State's multi-year drought. Ms. Jones reported that DWR activated its flood operations center to manage recent flooding in northern California, particularly in the areas surrounding the Russian River. Governor Newsom issued an emergency declaration for counties impacted by flooding.

Mr. Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) stated that as of March 1st the combined reservoir storage for MWD was 89% of capacity.

Ms. Cortez-Davis, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) reported that the current snowpack condition for the Eastern Sierra was 188%, which is significantly higher than the trend had been earlier in the year.

STATUS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS

Status of the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan

Mr. Harris reported that the Lower Basin principals met in Las Vegas, Nevada on February 25th to discuss the completion of the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) and new proposed extraordinary conservation intentionally created surplus (ICS) exhibits. Mr. Harris also noted that the Coachella Valley Water District raised several outstanding issues it had with the legislative language and proposed ICS exhibits. The Basin States principals were also notified that DCP hearings before the House and Senate had been tentatively scheduled for the last week of March.

Mr. Harris reported that Commissioner Burman has expressed her desire to finalize the DCP package, sign the Seven Basin States letter, and send the package to Congress on March 15th. Pursuant to the February 6th *Federal Register* notice soliciting Basin States input on Secretarial action to prevent reservoir decline, the public comment period would close on March 19th. The Commissioner hoped to finalize the DCP submittal before this deadline, allowing the notice to be rescinded. Mr. Harris reported that a March 8th conference call for the Basin States and Reclamation was held to discuss final DCP approvals and readiness to sign the Seven States letter.

Mr. Harris noted that work was done over the weekend to resolve several issues raised by the Coachella Valley Water District, resulting in a set of minor modifications to the proposed federal legislation, the MWD/CVWD intra-state agreement, and the Lower Basin Operations document. These minor modifications were vetted and approved by the Basin States and Reclamation on March 11th, allowing for the CVWD board to take affirmative action on the DCP on March 12th. MWD's board also took action on March 12th to allow Metropolitan to assume responsibility for any IID DCP contributions if needed. Finally, Mr. Harris reported that a call with Reclamation and the Basin States would be held after the Colorado River Board meeting to provide an update on California's readiness to sign a Seven Basin States letter sending the DCP package and proposed legislative language to Congress.

Board Member Hanks reported that the IID board had directed its attorneys to pursue some changes to the proposed federal legislative language. Mr. Hanks expressed concern that clauses of the currently proposed legislative language mirrored clauses in the federal language authorizing the lining of the All-American Canal, which was later found exempt from federal environmental review. Mr. Hanks maintained that these clauses must be removed from the proposed federal legislation. Mr. Harris noted that the All-American Canal lining project was subject to environmental review before being mandated by Congress and reiterated that the current legislative language has been narrowly tailored to the implementation of the current DCP.

Board Member Fisher advocated for delaying Board action to allow for more time to discuss potential modifications to the legislative language that would address IID's concerns while preserving the legislative waivers needed to implement the DCP. He expressed discomfort with moving forward with Board action without a consensus.

Chairman Nelson described the changes to the legislative language that had been made for CVWD and agreed with Mr. Fisher that extra time could help bring all parties to agreement.

Board Member Peterson noted that the Board has taken Board action without unanimity before and expressed concern that the Board might not be able to reconvene before March 19th.

Mr. Katz reported that the Board can hold a special meeting to discuss legislation with 48 hours' notice, and the Board discussed the requirements of holding a special meeting.

Mr. Peterson expressed concern that legislative language specifically addressing the Salton Sea would not be acceptable to the other Basin States, and moved that the Board authorize the Chairman to sign the Seven Basin States letter. The Board discussed the likelihood of reaching unanimous approval by the special meeting and whether the Board could authorize the Chairman to sign a letter with legislative language in substantial conformance with what was currently before the Board. The Board discussed potential changes to the legislative language, including whether it needs to specifically address the Salton Sea or Salton Sea funding. With the lack of a second, Mr. Peterson's motion did not move forward.

Chairman Nelson proposed scheduling a special Board meeting on Monday, March 18th to discuss whether to authorize the Chairman to sign the Seven Basin States letter to Congress, recommending passage of federal legislation authorizing the implementation of the DCP. Chairman Nelson reported that he would inform Reclamation and the Basin States of the Board's decision on the call scheduled after the meeting.

Status of the Salinity Control Forum

Mr. Harris reported that the Work Group met on February 20-22 and initiated work on the next triennial review. The review usually takes about a year to prepare. Mr. Harris reported that USGS continues to work on a study to understand the flattening trend of salinity in the Colorado River Basin despite the implementation of significant additional salinity control measures. USGS is also working on a detailed geohydrologic evaluation of the Pah Tempe Springs on the Virgin River in Utah as a potential point-source salinity control project that would control about 100,000 tons of salt per year.

On March 4th, a magnitude 4.1 earthquake occurred close to the Paradox Valley Unit. Mr. Harris reported that the injection well was shut down at the time and will remain shut down while Reclamation evaluate impacts to future operations. Reclamation expects to have the Paradox Valley Unit EIS wrapped up by fall or winter of this year.

Mr. Harris reported that the work group will meet in Salt Lake City, Utah on April 17-18 with the Forum meeting in Denver in June of this year.

Status of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Mr. Harris reported that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) met March 6-7 in Phoenix, Arizona. The group discussed recent changes in funding, which have shifted the program to reliance on federal appropriations, instead of power revenues. Mr. Harris noted that the group heard the preliminary results of the November 2018 High Flow Experiment (HFE) release and the summer 2018 "bug flow" releases from Glen Canyon Dam; both experiments seem to have met their objectives. The AMWG also discussed the proposed

downlisting of the razorback sucker and humpback chub from endangered to threatened; downlisting proposals are expected by the end of the year and will include specific details on the protections to be afforded to the species after their change in status. Finally, Mr. Harris noted that the Technical Work Group (TWG) was meeting March 12-14 in Phoenix to discuss the past year's monitoring and research.

Status of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Mr. Harris reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) financial work group had met via teleconference on February 21st. The group discussed the FY18, FY19, and FY20 budgets. Although expenditures in FY18 were significantly less than budgeted due to delays in construction, the FY19 budget and work plan would absorb the unspent funds and carry out the delayed projects. Finally, Mr. Harris reported that the LCR MSCP Steering Committee would meet in Las Vegas on April 24th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Harris reported that Mr. Andrew Wheeler has been confirmed as EPA Administrator. Mr. David Bernhardt, the current Acting Secretary of the Interior, was nominated to serve as Secretary of the Interior. His confirmation hearing has not been scheduled yet.

The President's FY-2020 budget was released on Monday, March 11th, and a more detailed budget is expected soon. Last week, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held a hearing about the state of the nation's water supply and reliability.

Mr. Harris reported that the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee is expected to hold a DCP hearing on March 27th. This will be a smaller hearing and witnesses may include Commissioner Burman and UB and LB representatives. The House Natural Resources Committee will schedule a DCP hearing on March 28th. This will likely be a larger hearing with representatives from each of the seven Basin States, Commissioner Burman, and possibly tribal and NGO representatives.

Finally, Mr. Harris noted that the next meeting of the Colorado River Board would be April 10th.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.