

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

A meeting of the Colorado River Board (Board) of California was held on Wednesday, October 9, 2019 at the Sheraton Ontario Airport Hotel, 429 North Vineyard Avenue, Ontario, California 91764.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

David DeJesus (MWD Alternate)  
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)  
James Hanks (IID)  
Henry Kuiper (Public Member)  
Jim Madaffer (SDCWA)

Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)  
Glen D. Peterson (MWD)  
David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)  
Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)  
David Vigil (DFW Alternate)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Nicole Neeman-Brady (Public Member)  
Evelyn Cortez-Davis (LADWP Alternate)  
Norma Sierra Galindo (IID Alternate)  
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)

Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)  
John Powell, Jr. (CVWD Alternate)  
Mark Watton (SDCWA Alternate)

Others Present:

Steve Abbott  
Brian Alvarez  
Melissa Baum Haley  
Christopher Harris  
Michael Hughes  
Lisa Johansen  
Rich Juricich  
Tom Levy  
Dylan Mohamed  
Jessica Neuwerth  
Ivory Reyburn  
Dan Robinson

Kelly Rodgers  
Shanti Rosset  
Tom Ryan  
Kimberlyn Velasquez  
Margaret Vick  
Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nelson announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:05 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. Hearing none, Chairman Nelson moved to the next item on the agenda.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the September 11, 2019, Board meeting minutes. Mr. Fisher moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Pettijohn. By roll-call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS**

### **Colorado River Basin Report**

Mr. Harris reported that October 1<sup>st</sup> was the beginning of Water Year-2020. He reported that the water level at Lake Powell was 3,614.9 feet with 13.20 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 54% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,083.5 feet with 10.3 MAF of storage, or 39% of capacity. Mr. Harris reported that as of October 6<sup>th</sup>, the total system storage was 31.6 MAF, or 53% of capacity, which is about 3.6 MAF more than system storage at this same time last year.

Mr. Harris reported that the preliminary observed Water Year-2019 Lake Powell inflow is 12.9 MAF, or 120% of normal. The Observed April to July 2019 Lake Powell inflow is 10.41 MAF, or 145% of normal. The September 2019 observed Lake Powell inflow was 0.14 MAF, or 35% of normal, and the September forecasted Lake Powell inflow is 0.38 MAF, or 74% of normal. To date, the Water Year-2019 precipitation is 15% of normal.

Mr. Harris reported that precipitation conditions were below average in August throughout the Basin. In September, precipitation conditions slightly improved in the Upper Green River Basin as well as the southern Arizona, due to monsoonal activity.

Mr. Harris reported that as of October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Upper Basin reservoirs were close to capacity, noting that the reservoirs continued to benefit from the above average precipitation that occurred during the winter of Water Year-2019. He also reported that on the regulatory storage conditions in the Lower Basin. As of October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Brock and Senator Wash reservoirs captured 99,231 AF

and 82,614 AF, respectively. Mr. Harris reported excess flows to Mexico were 14,151 AF through October 6<sup>th</sup>. As of October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the total bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 70,984 AF.

### **State and Local Report**

Mr. Harris reported that California's precipitation conditions were above average for Water Year-2019. Mr. Harris also reported that California's reservoir storage conditions were also above average.

Board member Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that as of October 1<sup>st</sup>, the combined reservoir storage is 91% of capacity.

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

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

Mr. Harris provided the Board with an update on the status of the various work groups established under Minute 323. He noted that work group membership typically comprises a small group of state and federal representatives from the U.S. and Mexico.

Mr. Harris reported that the Hydrology Work Group recently met in Tijuana, Mexico, and approved its proposed work and communication plan, which will ensure that Mexican stakeholders will receive information on hydrology and water use. Mr. Harris reported that the Salinity Work Group is evaluating the initial results of a real-time monitoring and data collection and archival system for binational salinity management. He noted that the consulting team for the Desalination Work Group recently completed a preliminary draft feasibility assessment of desalination options along the Sonoran Coast. The Desalination Work Group will be exploring other areas with the potential for desalination, including along the Pacific and Gulf of California coasts of Baja. Mr. Harris noted that the Environmental Work Group has been moving forward with habitat restoration projects but has yet to receive any federal water, which is dependent on outside factors, including the progress of water conservation projects managed by the Projects Work Group. The Projects Work Group recently met in Mexicali, Mexico to discuss completion of the Minute 319 projects and targets for the Minute 323 projects. Mr. Harris reported that two additional work groups, the All-American Canal Turnout and Flow Variability groups, have yet to meet.

Finally, Mr. Harris reported on the Minute Oversight Group, which meets twice a year and discusses overall Minute implementation and the activities of the various work groups. He noted that the group would be meeting October 16<sup>th</sup> and would discuss the progress of the Projects Work Group in particular. In response to a question from Chairman Nelson, Mr. Harris noted that these

water savings projects could include a range of activities, including canal lining, on-farm efficiency, and fallowing. Chairman Nelson requested that an overview of the different federal and local organizations in Mexico participating in the implementation of Minute 323 be prepared for the next meeting of the Board.

Board Member Fisher noted that the Hydrology Work Group and binational efforts in general over the past several years have increased Mexican stakeholders' comfort with the use of both hydrology and reservoir volumes in determining annual water availability. Mr. Harris reported that the Bureau of Reclamation has recently begun including Mexican stakeholders in the hydrology and water supply briefings provided to U.S. stakeholders.

### **Status of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program**

Board Staff Ms. Neuwerth reported that the High Flow Experiment (HFE) Technical Team had determined that no fall HFE would be conducted at Glen Canyon Dam this year due to limited monsoonal activity and sediment input to the system. Ms. Neuwerth noted that the potential to conduct an HFE will be available every fall and spring through the duration of the Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP). Ms. Neuwerth also reported that the Technical Work Group (TWG) of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program would be meeting October 21-22 in Phoenix, Arizona.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that a lawsuit against the LTEMP EIS was filed on October 1<sup>st</sup> by Save the Colorado, Center for Biological Diversity, and Living Rivers, alleging that the plan failed to consider the impacts of climate change on the operation of Glen Canyon Dam. The suit seeks to invalidate the LTEMP and prompt consideration of alternative management scenarios for Glen Canyon Dam, including "Fill Mead First", decommissioning the dam, and run-of-the-river operations. Ms. Neuwerth noted that annual operations and release volumes for Glen Canyon Dam are set by the 2007 Interim Guidelines as modified by the recent Drought Contingency Plan. The LTEMP uses this annual release volume as an input to determine monthly, daily, and hourly release volume. In addition, local resource conditions are used to determine whether any experimental releases will be conducted. Ms. Neuwerth noted that the LTEMP was developed to avoid affecting the annual release volume from Glen Canyon Dam and other matters related to the conjunctive management of Lakes Powell and Mead.

In response to a question on whether similar arguments could be leveled against other Colorado River programs, Mr. Harris noted that the LTEMP may have been uniquely vulnerable as a recently completed environmental process that focused on resources of particular concern to certain groups. Mr. Harris also noted that recent changes in Council on Environmental Quality guidelines and regulations had introduced additional uncertainty on how to address climate change in NEPA documents.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Washington D.C. Updates**

Mr. Harris reported that the Senate committees approved several appropriations bills, with an increase of \$4 billion over last year's funding levels, including funding for Lower Colorado River operations, Salinity Control, and Salton Sea research. Mr. Harris noted that the government is funded through November 21<sup>st</sup> by continuing resolution.

Mr. Harris reported that the Administration recently repealed the Obama Administration's Waters of the United States rule; the application and administration of the Clean Water Act will therefore revert to the determinations made in 1986 as later modified in 2008.

Mr. Harris also noted that the U.S. Department of Energy has awarded \$100 million in desalination research to the National Alliance of Water Innovation to explore more efficient and cost-effective technologies to treat saline or brackish water.

### **California Department of Water Resources Updates**

#### *Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Summit and Workshop*

Mr. Harris reported that Board staff recently attended a DWR-hosted Climate Change Summit and Workshop, at which water managers and climate experts discussed future climate change challenges and uncertainties, potential impacts to California systems, and Governor Newsom's Executive Order 10-19 on climate resiliency. Through this workshop, DWR intends to develop a policy recommendation to be included in the Governor's Water Resilience Portfolio. Mr. Harris noted that the Board will distribute copies of the workshop presentations as requested.

#### *California Natural Resources Agency All-Directors Workshop*

Mr. Harris reported that California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Secretary Wade Crowfoot hosted a workshop for CNRA agency directors on September 19-20 in Sacramento. Mr. Harris reported that the workshop focused on the key priorities of Secretary Crowfoot, including climate resilience, protecting and enhancing California's biodiversity, developing a "California Access for All" agenda, and cutting agency red tape. Mr. Harris noted that the workshop was a good chance for agency directors to discuss intersecting issues.

#### *Governor Newsom Appoints New Assistant Secretary for Salton Sea Policy*

Mr. Harris reported that Governor Newsom appointed Mr. Arturo Delgado as the Assistant Secretary of Resources for Salton Sea Policy on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Harris noted that Mr.

Delgado had been involved in development of the California permit for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program and has recently worked for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service.

### **Upcoming Events**

Mr. Harris described several upcoming events that might be of interest to the Board, including:

- Salton Sea Symposium, October 17-18, Palm Desert, California
- Salinity Control Forum/Advisory Council Meetings, October 22-25, Phoenix, Arizona
- Colorado River Conversations Scenario Planning Workshop, October 28-31, Tucson, Arizona
- Basin States Climate and Hydrology Workgroup Meeting, November 12, Salt Lake City, Utah

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m.