

Minutes of Meeting
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, December 14, 2022

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held on Wednesday, December 14, 2022, at the Caesars Palace Las Vegas Hotel and Casino, 3570 S. Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89109.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

David De Jesus (MWD Alternate)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)
John B. Hamby (IID)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)
Peter Nelson, Chairman (CVWD)

Glen D. Peterson (MWD)
David R. Pettijohn, Vice Chairman (LADWP)
Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)
Gary Croucher (SDCWA Alternate)
Jim Madaffer (SDCWA)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)
James Hanks (IID Alternate)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)

Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)
David Vigil (DFW Alternate)

Others Present:

Steve Abbot
John Aguilar
Luis Angel Arroyo
Jim Atkinson
Nick Bahr
Linda Bahr
Don Barnett
Alan Boyce
David Bradshaw
Dee Bradshaw
Alex Cardenas
Edgar Carrera
Grant Chaffin
Robert Cheng
Danielle Coats
Mike Cohen
Andrew Colace
Gloria Cordero
Liz Crosson
Dennis Davis

Christine DeMyers
Dan Denham
Gina Dockstader
Kevin Donhoff
Chris Dull
J.R. Echard
Jason Eckberg
Troy Edwards
Mackenzie Elmer
Craig Elmore
Stephen J. Elmore
Joaquin Esquivel
Karin Eugenio
Ray Face
Andrew Frost
Javier Gonzalez
Robert Grantham
Adel Hagekhalil
Emma Hager

Jasmin Hall
Tom Havens
Geoff Holbrook
Ned Hyduke Jeff Inwood
Jose Luis Jardines
Jordan Joaquin
Rich Juricich
Mel Katz
Sandy Kerl
Russell Leferre
Ronald Leimgruber
Thomas Love
Jing Luo
Gina Maguire
Frank Martinez
Dan McMillan
Brian McNeece
Aaron Mead
Marty Miller
Anna Murveit
Jessica Neuwerth
Nisha Noroian
Mike Pacheco
Kyle Paoletta
G. Patrick O'Dowd
Jennifer Pitt
Asia Philbin
Jennifer Pitt
Roberto A. Real Rangel

Shana Rapport
Angela Rashid
David Reynolds
Brad Robinson
Jerry Rovey
Frank Ruiz
Tom Ryan
Patrick Sanchez
Joel Scalzitti
Carrie Scott
Darren Simon
Ed Smith
Tim Smith
Travis Staheli
Jacqueline Tinetti
Jesus Tovar
Sara Tucker
Meggan Valencia
Katie Vanyo
Richard L. Vasquez
Cherie Watte
Shawn Weddle
Jay Weiner
Meena Westford
Patrick Whitby
Stephanie Zehven
Jerry Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nelson announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:19 a.m.

Several Colorado River Board of California (Board) members took the opportunity to introduce colleagues from their respective agencies, as well as outside agencies. Chairman Nelson introduced Mr. Joaquin Esquivel from the California State Water Resources Control Board, Ms. Sara Tucker, the CRB's Washington DC lobbyist and Mr. Patrick O'Dowd from the Salton Sea Authority.

Board member Hamby, representing the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) introduced Mr. Sergio Quiroz, Assistant General Manager, Mr. Mike Pacheco, the Water Department Manager, and IID Board Members, Ms. Gina Dockstader, Mr. Javier Gonzalez, Mr. Alex Cardenas, and Ms. Karin Eugenio. He also introduced Ms. Joanna Smith Hoff and Mr. Geoff Holbrook as both part of IID's general counsel.

Board member Fisher, representing Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) introduced Mr. Jack Seiler, Alternate on the Colorado River Board, Mr. J.R Echard, General Manager of PVID, and Mr. Ned Hyduke, former General Manager. In addition, he also introduced PVID Vice President Brad Robinson and Board members, Mr. Grant Chaffin and Ms. Nisha Noroian.

Chairman Nelson, representing the Coachella Valley Irrigation District (CVWD), introduced Mr. Robert Cheng, Assistant Manager and Mr. John Aguilar, CVWD Board member.

Vice Chairman Pettijohn, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, introduced himself as the director of the Department of Resources and asked staff present to stand.

Board member Madaffer, representing the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) introduced the agency's General Manager, Ms. Sandy Kerl, Mr. Dan Denham, Deputy General Manager, Mr. Gary Croucher, alternate to the Colorado River Board, and Mr. Marty Miller, a SDCWA Board member representing Vista Irrigation District. Mr. Madaffer also introduced other SDCWA staff, Mr. Darren Simon, QSA Outreach Coordinator and Mr. Dennis Davis, Water Resources Specialist.

Board member Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (CA DWR) introduced Joaquin Esquivel, Chairman of the California State Water Resources Control Board.

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 November 9th, 2022, Board meeting minutes. Mr. Hamby moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Pettijohn. By roll-call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the Board meeting Calendar for 2023. Mr. Pettijohn moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Ms. Jones. By roll-call vote, the Board Meeting Calendar for 2023 was unanimously approved. Mr. Peterson requested that traveling meeting be considered in 2023.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORTS

Colorado River Basin Report

Mr. Juricich reported that as of December 12th, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,526.97 feet with 5.66 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 24% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,043.56 feet with 7.23 MAF of storage, or 28% of capacity. The total system storage was 19.12 MAF, or 33% of capacity, which is 3.06 MAF less than system storage at this time last year.

Mr. Juricich reported that as of December 1st, the observed November inflow to Lake Powell was 0.35 MAF, or 83% of normal. The December inflow forecast to Lake Powell is 0.28 MAF, or 87% of normal. The forecasted Water Year-2023 (WY-2023) unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is 7.70 MAF, or 80% of normal. The forecasted April to July inflow into Lake Powell is 5.04 MAF, or 79% of normal. The WY-2023 precipitation to date is 97% of normal and the current Basin snowpack is 115% of normal.

Mr. Juricich reported on the snow water equivalent (SWE) of the Basin stating that above normal conditions existed in the Rocky Mountains and mountains of the northern Colorado River Basin. He added that below normal SWE conditions existed in Arizona and Colorado, noting that current Basin SWE conditions are an improvement from last year's conditions.

Mr. Juricich reported on the below normal soil moisture conditions in Fall 2022, noting that summer monsoonal activity improved soil moisture conditions compared to last year.

Mr. Juricich presented a graphic showing the precipitation anomaly for all La Nina events compared to the 1991-2020 precipitation average. He reported that during La Nina years, the Rocky Mountains, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah experienced close to normal or average precipitation.

Mr. Juricich reported on the projections from the October and November 2022 24-Month study. He stated that the most probable trace for 2024 has a Lake Powell release of 8.11 MAF. He noted that Lake Mead's most probable elevation will drop to a Level 3 shortage by June 2023.

Mr. Juricich reported that through the end of November, the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 98,462 AF and 71,107 AF, respectively. He also reported that the excess deliveries to

Mexico were 8,511 AF, compared to 28,216 AF this time last year. Finally, the total amount of saline drainage water bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 136,957 AF through December 5th.

State and Local Report

Board Member Jones, reported on the results of the experimental forecast of November 2022 to March 2023 that analyzed the 10th, 50th, and 90th percentile for runoff in Northern and Southern California as well as the Upper Colorado. She noted that the experimental forecast model is funded by NOAA and has better accuracy, especially for the Upper Colorado River Basin.

Ms. Jones thanked Sara Tucker for her lobbying efforts in regard to NOAA, which may lead to additional funding in the Senate Appropriations bill.

Chairman Nelson commented that the 8-station index is 113% of normal, 6-station index is 85% of normal and the 5-station index is 130% of normal. He added that the aggregate SWE for California is 204% of normal. Ms. Jones remarked that California had record wet conditions last December, and there was no precipitation again until April. She cautioned that although precipitation conditions are good, it is still early in WY-2023 and we could be faced with similar conditions this year.

Board Member Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that as of December 1st, MWD's reservoir storage is 64% of capacity. He also reported that MWD has delivered 1.39 MAF to its service area, which is 92% of the annual average delivery to date.

Board Member Pettijohn representing LADWP stated, that there have been significant storms within the Los Angeles service area. He noted that snowpack is 158% of normal to date, he noted that LADWP is having a great start but reminded the Board that there were similar conditions last year, before precipitation conditions dried up for the remainder of the winter season.

AGENCY END-OF-YEAR REPORTS

Coachella Valley Water District

Chairman Nelson reported on accomplishments of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), conservation efforts in response to drought, groundwater replenishment activities, the mid-canal storage project.

Regarding drought response, Chairman Nelson reported that CVWD implemented a water shortage contingency plan, in accordance with the governor's declaration of emergencies. CVWD went to six tiers in its urban water pricing structure and activated all Level 2 and Level 3 mandatory conservation actions, including reducing the outdoor water budget by ten percent. Each property in the valley has their own water budget that was reduced by ten percent. Drought penalties were imposed in order to increase the price of urban water and thus, reduce demand.

Chairman Nelson reported that the Colorado River water conservation program implemented with the growers didn't really take off. In response, CVWD promoted a replenishment facility procurement program that was able to conserve a little over 9,000-acre feet to put into the 500+ Plan in 2022.

Chairman Nelson reported that CVWD communicated with urban users with education and water conservation programs and provided \$3 per square foot incentive as a turf rebate. Two CVWD cities doubled that rate. CVWD is seeing a lot of interest in the program.

Chairman Nelson reported that since 2007, through CVWD's landscape plan and irrigation design ordinance, 270,000-acre feet of water has been saved. CVWD's large landscape smart controller rebate program has saved 240,000-acre feet of water since 2008. The tiered water rates mentioned earlier have saved just over three quarters of a million-acre feet. CVWD is saving approximately 119,000-acre feet of urban water use annually and looking to do more.

Chairman Nelson reported that on the Colorado River, CVWD's agriculture use is about 3.8-acre feet per acre. Sixty percent of customers are using drip irrigation. Lining 49 miles of the Coachella Canal, with partners San Diego and the San Luis Rey Indian Tribe under the Quantification Settlement Agreement, is saving 132,000-acre feet a year.

Chairman Nelson reported that CVWD replenishment activities started in 1918, beginning with the canal coming into the Coachella Valley and the beginning of CVWD State water project deliveries. Prior to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, several replenishment facilities were built including Whitewater, Mission Creek, the Levy facility, the Palm Desert facility. CVWD's replenishment facilities have put 4 million-acre feet in the ground. There is an Oasis In-Lieu Recharge Project which started about ten years ago to alleviate groundwater pumping. This is to use Colorado River as a substitution for groundwater use, which is scheduled for delivery in 2023 to 2024.

For their mid-canal storage project, CVWD partners with the San Diego County Water Authority, San Luis Rey Indian Tribe, and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). The project has received a low-interest loan to remove tiling to build a storage facility in the canal to better manage the flows and have less regulatory water and water loss at the end of the line. The design work was completed in 2022 with construction expected to finish in 2023.

Imperial Irrigation District

Ms. Shields, the Water Department Manager from the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), provided a summary of IID's accomplishments in 2022. Ms. Shields reported that due to Tier 1 shortage requirements for 2022, IID must adhere to an overrun payback obligation. She explained that to meet this obligation IID's Board of Directors implemented a retroactive Equitable Distribution Plan (EDP) in mid-May. She stated that IID water users responded immediately by reducing cropping plans and water use demands. She added that within four months, IID's water use projects decreased by about 100,000 AF an underrun forecast before measurable rainfall was recorded in the Imperial Valley.

Ms. Shields reported that IID has continued coordination of local renewable energy and mineral extraction projects and proposals at the Salton Sea. She also showed photos of IID's installation of additional buoys on the All-American Canal to reduce the risk of drownings in the canal.

Ms. Shields reported that it is the 20th anniversary of Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) water transfers. She stated that IID continues to meet all QSA water conservation obligations generating over 7.2 MAF of conserved water to support Southern California water supply reliability and Lake Mead through system efficiency and conservation improvements as well as on-farm efficiency conservation programs. She stated that IID growers have shown support and participation in the on-farm efficiency conservation programs. She reported that IID hopes to continue to grow the on-farm efficiency and conservation program to create additional conservation.

Ms. Shields remarked that water conservation also means less water that will go to the Salton Sea. She noted that IID continues to work with the State of California Natural Resources Agency to develop restoration and mitigation projects. She hopes that some of the State restoration projects will be completed next year.

Ms. Shields reported that IID developed the California Drought Protection Plan proposal to conserve up to an additional 1.6 MAF cumulative water savings through 2026, with IID conserving up to 1 MAF pending sufficient funding, voluntary participation, Salton Sea mitigation, permitting and IID Board approval. She reported that there a lot of the details to work out, but over a four-year period, IID is proposed to conserve 250,000 AF of additional conservation each year. She stated that this would increase IID's conservation from 16% to 24% of its annual entitlement. She reported that IID has submitted for federal funding to support this conservation effort. She stated that IID has begun discussions with growers about this program and how it will impact current on-farm efficiency programs and the EDP. Ms. Shields remarked that from 2003 to 2022, IID's QSA Water Conservation and Transfer has generated more than 7.2 MAF.

Ms. Shields stated that in conjunction with the potential drought protection plan from California, the IID's Board authorized a partnership with the federal government, California Natural Resources Agency, and the Coachella Valley Water District that would provide \$250 million of federal funding to accelerate implementation of the Salton Sea.

Ms. Shields acknowledged the retirement of Board member Jim Hanks and recognized his 16-year term on IID's Board and eleven-year service on the CRB.

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Vice Chairman Pettijohn reported that the City of Los Angeles has been in a serious drought situation throughout 2022. An executive order has been issued that directed all water suppliers to reduce water use and adhere to Level 2 of LADWP's water shortage contingency plan.

Mr. Pettijohn reported that the city is getting about fifty-five gallons per person per day from the State of California and supplementing that water with local supplies. LADWP has instituted Level 3 in the City of Los Angeles. Customers can water outdoors two days a week, eight minutes a station, for a total of watering outdoors of sixteen minutes a week.

Mr. Pettijohn reported there has been about a ten percent reduction in water use this year due to the action taken. The City of Los Angeles is at 110 gallons per person per day, including water losses and commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

Mr. Pettijohn reported that the LADWP has gone through significant operational changes. Dependence upon State Water Project (SWP) and lack of access to Colorado water storage is problematic. LADWP is shifting demand from the SWP to Colorado River where possible but there are limits to what can be done operationally. Vice Chairman Pettijohn reported that LADWP has done everything it can to augment supplies with groundwater, as well.

Mr. Pettijohn reported on LADWP conservation activities. LADWP increased total rebates from \$150 to \$300 for people who want to replace their landscape outdoors and increased the rebates from \$3 per square foot to \$5 per square foot. LADWP also increased incentives for their commercial sector, now offering up to \$2 million to a business to improve their water efficiency. Mr. Pettijohn reported that LADWP also offers pre-landscape design services to customers who want to replace their landscapes outdoors and is expanding its home water use report program. Mr. Pettijohn reported that LADWP provides recycled water fill stations. Those in Los Angeles who want to use more than their allotted water, can get up to 300 gallons per trip to water outdoors.

Mr. Pettijohn reported on a program offering discounted metering devices, which allow customers to connect their water meter to a smart phone to review their water usage. Leaks will be visible as a spike in use. As of December 1st, LADWP has sold over 9,300 devices to customers.

Mr. Pettijohn reported that there has been a major increase in reports of water waste to LADWP's water conservation response unit that investigates complaints. When customers see wasted water flowing down the street or flowing off properties, they can report the water waste. LADWP sends its response teams out and writes a citation if they don't receive a response. He remarked that it's been an effective way to enforce the ordinance.

Mr. Pettijohn reported that LADWP is also investing in stormwater capture and groundwater replenishment. He stated that LADWP is moving forward with plans to create stormwater capture infiltration at nine parks in a disadvantaged area of the San Fernando Valley, providing community benefits and stormwater capture. Mr. Pettijohn reported on the groundwater replenishment program taking water from Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant and putting it into the Hansen Spreading Grounds, providing an additional 17,000 AF a year at the Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant.

Mr. Pettijohn reported that the City of LA used 12,000 AF of recycled water this year, the most in its history, and plans to dramatically increase recycled water use in the future. Operation NEXT will recycle wastewater treatment plant water and return it to LADWP's system, bringing that water to groundwater

basins and eventually using it as source water for the plant. The end goal is for all four water reclamation plants in the City of Los Angeles to be 100% recycled water.

Metropolitan Water District

Board Member Peterson reported that the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) spent \$40 million over the last two years on conservation, turf replacement and other devices. This resulted in replacement of nine million square feet of turf, 27,000 smart irrigation controllers, 60,000 high efficiency sprinkler nozzles, and 31,000 high efficiency clothes washers, resulting in lifetimes water savings of 89,000 AF.

Mr. Peterson reported that MWD's main focus is improving outdoor water efficiency. In addition to the incentive rebates, MWD offers a wide range of classes, workshops, and trainings for both residents and landscape professionals. Mr. Peterson reported on MWD's Turf Replacement Program research, which found that for every one-hundred homes that received a rebate to convert landscape by taking out grass and putting in California Friendly landscape, 132 more homes do it voluntarily. The program has been in place for ten to fifteen years.

Mr. Peterson reported on MWD's Board action in November 2021 to adopt a resolution declaring a water shortage and prompted a call for accelerated conservation. He stated that MWD focused on enhanced incentives for public agency projects so agencies could lead by example. Mr. Peterson reported that on December 13th, MWD's Board passed a resolution to reaffirm the Regional Drought Emergency in effect since November 2021. This action recognized the seriousness of the Colorado River drought and public call for urban reduction and prepare for potential Water Supply Allocation in Spring 2023.

Chairman Nelson announced that Mr. Peterson would no longer be serving on the Colorado River Board in a few months and would be replaced Ms. Gloria Cordero. He thanked Mr. Peterson for his leadership, knowledge, and inquisitive questions on the Colorado River Basin. Mr. Peterson stated that Ms. Cordero is still awaiting approval by the Governor of California.

Palo Verde Irrigation District

Board Member Fisher reported that the Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) has three new members, that Mr. JR Echard became the manager following the retirement of Ned Hyduke and that PVID's president, Jack Seiler, matriculated out of office and is replaced by Bart Fisher. Jack Seiler is the alternate member to the Colorado River Board from Palo Verde.

Mr. Fisher reported that California is committed to contributing up to 400,000 AF of conserved water to try to sustain Lake Mead's elevation levels. Palo Verde, starting in 2021, was contributing about 60,000 AF annually in the 500-Plus Plan and in cooperation with MWD made a 100 percent option call under MWD's agreement with the intent of a large majority of that water being contributed to Lake Mead. This is the maximum amount of conservation allowable under the environmental compliance under the Metropolitan program.

Mr. Fisher introduced Mr. JR Echard. Mr. Echard reported that through the 500-Plus Plan, PVID contributed 60,000 AF of conserved water to Lake Mead as system water in both 2021 and 2022, through the following program with Metropolitan. Mr. Echard reported that on November 21st, Metropolitan joined with PVID to submit a proposal to Reclamation through its Lower Colorado River Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program. Under the proposal, a one-hundred percent fallowing call would be issued through the MWD/PVID fallowing program, fallowing up to 90,460 acres (30% of the Palo Verde Valley) for a minimum of 3 years, saving up to 370,000 AF in Lake Mead as system water.

Mr. Echard reported that PVID was awarded a grant from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to line 1.75 miles of an open canal. He stated that PVID is continuing its development of its environmental watershed plan. Mr. Echard stated that PVID plans to evaluate its drains, canals, surface, and subsurface flow that returns water to the Colorado River. He stated that PVID will analyze whether there are reuse opportunities.

San Diego County Water Authority

Board Member Madaffer reported on some of the key initiatives for the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA). Mr. Madaffer noted that SDCWA's key drought response actions including continued participation in the QSA with on-going investments in the Imperial Valley and a reaffirmed commitment to conservation through participation in the Colorado River Basin MOU, incentives to support regional conservation, and expanded outreach.

Mr. Madaffer reported on the San Vicente energy storage project, a partnership with the City of San Diego. SDCWA is now authorized to have staff negotiate with a full-service team to perform the first phase of the project. The project will pump water up during the day and when the sun goes down at night will drop water down to generate energy.

Mr. Madaffer reported that the Carlsbad Desalination Plant served one hundred billion gallons of water to San Diego County. Board Member Madaffer cited this as an example of where infrastructure funds from the Biden administration could be used to add another 6,000 AF production to the plant, reducing demand from the Colorado River.

Mr. Madaffer reported that the Water Authority has named a top workplace in 2022 as well as being awarded its first ever utility patent for a tool that was invented by staff to help save time and reduce cost and for safety.

Mr. Madaffer reported that SDCWA supported other member agencies' local supply projects. He showed a list of some of the projects. Projects already online are generating about 12,000 AF of water per year. This includes the Sweetwater Brackish and Pure Water Oceanside projects, as well as the Fallbrook Santa Margarita conjunctive use project. Mr. Madaffer reported on projects that are planned to come online between 2023 and 2025 and that will add an additional 33,000 AF of water per year during initial phases.

Mr. Madaffer reported that the SDCWA continues to want to seek participation in the ICS program for storage in Lake Mead as a long-term strategy for flexible management.

Board Member Jones provided additional context about California's on-going drought response. She stated that during the past and current fiscal year, California Department of Water Resources has awarded \$262 million in drought emergency response grants to small agencies, which included 127 projects, and \$268 million to larger agencies. She reported that this year, the State budget gave out \$500 million for drought relief grants, of which \$50 million is earmarked for MWD. She added that MWD and LADWP have previously mentioned the struggles with moving Colorado River Water into parts of MWD's western service area and that much of the \$50 million will go to helping with this issue.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN STATES ACTIVITIES

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program Implementation

Mr. Don Barnett, Executive Director of the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum, provided a report on the activities of the Salinity Control Program. Reclamation's primary salinity coordinator, Aung Hla, announced his retirement effective November 30, 2022. This is a crucial position that oversees many aspects of the Salinity Control Program, including the Basinwide and Basin States program funding, and facilitates program implementation and coordination between federal agencies. The Forum expects to work closely with Reclamation in providing the states thoughts about desirable qualifications to fill this important position.

Mr. Barnett provided an update on the status of the Paradox Valley Salinity Control Program. Reclamation concluded the six-month injection test at the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU) on December 2nd, 2022. The surface injection pressure at shut in was ~4110 psi and all conditions were normal. Pressure falloff data will be collected for three weeks, then provided to a technical consultant for formal analysis of well and reservoir performance. During this period, Reclamation will evaluate the seismicity recorded during the test, focusing on the aftershock region of the 2019 earthquake. Reclamation will also model different injection rates and shut down scenarios to determine the next operational parameters. After review of the aforementioned analyses, a decision will be made on operations concurrent with the seismic risk analysis process and until its conclusion. Previously PVU had not operated since March 2019 in response to a significant seismic event. When fully operational, the PVU removed about 100,000 tons of salt per year that would have otherwise entered the Colorado River. Reclamation has proposed releasing a Statement of Objectives to solicit new proposals for PVU. The Forum is tracking PVU activities closely and will advocate for restarting injection at PVU within the constraints of the existing infrastructure as soon as possible.

Mr. Barnett provided an overview of the current Salinity Program funding. He mentioned the program has \$10.7 million in program funding from Reclamation and \$2.0 million from the Bureau of Land Management for FY 2024.

Status of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that an updated Biological Opinion was finalized that will allow for additional flow reductions along the Lower Colorado River. Under the new Biological Opinion, along the lower Colorado River from Hoover Dam to Imperial Dam, flows can be reduced up to 1.574 MAFY. Ms. Neuwerth stated that further flow reductions above 1.574 MAFY will likely be need going forward.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

DOI to Modify 2007 Guidelines for 2023 and 2024

Mr. Harris reported that on October 28th, the Department of the Interior (DOI) published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the December 2007 Record of Decision (ROD). Mr. Harris stated that DOI is accepting comments on the NOI, recommendations, and suggestions associated with the any potential modification of the ROD by December 20th. He reported that within California, the Board staff is working closely with the agencies to develop a comment response letter for submission on or before December 20th. He added that Board staff is also working with colleagues in the other seven Basin states to see if it is possible to utilize joint messaging topics. Mr. Harris reported that there was a recent meeting among the seven Basin states and DOI to develop a framework alternative, which is one of the suggested alternatives in the NOI. He added that during the meeting they also discussed what Reclamation would do to modify the 2007 ROD if there is not a framework agreement.

Mr. Harris explained that California and the other states will work to collaboratively develop an alternative by the end of January. He stated that Reclamation and DOI will probably have a draft supplemental EIS by late spring and then a final supplemental EIS and modified 2007 ROD by mid-summer.

Reclamation Launches Post-2026 Technical Workgroup

Mr. Harris reported that by the end of 2026, the existing 2007 Interim Guidelines will expire along with the DCP and Minute 323. He announced that Reclamation is launching a Post-2026 Technical Workgroup which will assist interested partners from across the Basin gain a better understanding of the technical tools and approaches for the post-2026 process. The workgroup will include Tribes, States, water agencies, non-governmental organizations, other federal agencies, academics, and Mexico. He added that the workgroup will facilitate the transfer of information and data among those participating in discussions in developing the next set of guidelines.

Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation will be innovative and thoughtful on their approach with the development of the next set of Guidelines by utilizing robust decision-making strategies and scenarios.

Washington, DC Updates

Ms. Tucker reported on the 2022 mid-term elections, noting that the Republicans will have a majority in the House of Representatives (House), by gaining nine seats. She added that a vote for the House speakership will occur on January 3, 2023, and it is expected that Representative (Rep.) McCarthy will win this role. She stated that Democratic leadership has changed to include Representatives Jeffries from New York, Aguilar from California, and Clark from Massachusetts.

Ms. Tucker reported that by January, the House and Senate leadership will be known. She stated Congressman Westerman will be the chair of the House Resources Committee. She stated that there is a majority of Democrats in the Senate which allows them to process legislation and nominations, in addition to bigger budgets and stronger power to issue subpoenas. She also noted Senator Sinema's decision to leave the Democratic party and become an Independent, noting that it shouldn't have an impact on the Senate.

Ms. Tucker reported that senators in Basin states who were all up for reelection won their elections. She reported that the House is going to vote on a continuing resolution (CR) and the Senate will adopt it during this week, which will give them an additional week to negotiate for the omnibus spending package. Ms. Tucker stated that she did not believe that the government would shut down due to retirements in the Senate and that there will be a full year of omnibus appropriations. She reported that the Senate is preparing to pass the National Defense Authorization Act (NDA). She explained that the NDA includes the Water Resources Development Act which authorizes billions of dollars for the U.S Army Corp of Engineers flood control navigation and restoration projects.

Ms. Tucker reported that she has been working with California senators to get a Salton Sea bill passed by Congress. She stated that Congress is also considering a small package of water bills that include the Salton Sea bill as well as other Basin system conservation and the Operation Recovery Act. She stated that the bill should pass in the Senate and the House and then move to the President for signature.

Ms. Tucker reported that on December 13th, Deputy Secretary of the DOI and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing to review the DOI's implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. She noted that there were several questions related to the Colorado River and how the funding has impacted the drought in the West.

Ms. Tucker reported that fifteen senators, including California, Arizona, Washington, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oregon sent a letter to Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Tom Vilsack to divert appropriate resources to the drought crisis in the West. She added that this letter and pressure from Western States could influence Congress to address drought concerns in the Farm Bill that will be passed in 2023.

Chairman Nelson thanked Ms. Tucker and stated that she was a great asset to the Colorado River Board of California.

ADDRESS FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR WATER AND SCIENCE

Chairman Nelson introduced Ms. Tanya Trujillo, Assistant Secretary of Water and Science. Ms. Trujillo stated that she learned a lot from the presentations. She stated that the importance of the Colorado River is clear to her and the federal government and is now also recognized across the country and the world.

Ms. Trujillo remarked that she is an alumna of the Colorado River Board of California and has had the opportunity to work with many of the municipal and agricultural agencies. She noted her gratitude for the opportunity to learn about the complex issues in California and the importance of California's Colorado River water apportionments to the people who grow food and provide water to cities and tribal communities.

Ms. Trujillo stated that earlier today she had an opportunity to meet with the Upper Basin Colorado Commission and recognized how interconnected issues in the Upper and Lower Colorado are. She emphasized that in her current role as the Assistant Secretary of Water and Science, she has direct oversight of Reclamation and the United States Geological Services (USGS). She stated that she also works closely with Secretary Haaland and the Deputy Secretary on issues throughout the departments. She stated that she also works closely with her counterpart for Indian Affairs, Assistant Secretary, Mr. Bryan Newland and Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Ms. Shannon Estenoz. She noted that they work as a team on a host of complicated and interconnected issues.

Ms. Trujillo added that she is happy to be part of the team at DOI that is working on the supplemental EIS process. She stated that this process is one of DOI's major initiatives to evaluate what additional options DOI has for operating the Colorado River reservoir system during critically dire hydrology. She reported that DOI will be working closely with the water users in California and agencies represented on the Board to make sure DOI is successful in protecting the resources in the Basin.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.