

Minutes of Meeting  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at the Steve Robbins administration Building, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, CA 92211

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	Peter Nelson (CVWD)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)	Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate)
Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)	

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Gary Croucher (SDCWA Alternate)	Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)
David De Jesus (MWD Alternate)	Glen D. Peterson (MWD)
James Hanks (IID Alternate)	Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)

Others Present:

Steve Abbott	Henry Martinez
Jim Barrett	Jessica Neuwerth
Scott Burritt	Ben Olson
Grant Chaffin	John Powell, Jr.
Gloria Cordero	Shana Rapoport
Dennis Davis	David Rheinheimer
Gina Dockstader	Brad Robinson
JR Echard	Shanti Rosset
Chris Harris	Jim Russell
Bill Hasencamp	Tina Shields
Rich Juricich	Gary Tavetian
Kit San Lai	Petya Vasileva
Tom Levy	Meena Wesford
Victoria Llort	Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

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

Ms. Cordero, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, remarked that she is looking forward to joining the Colorado River Board of California (CRB) soon and thanked everyone for a warm welcome.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the December 14, 2022, Board meeting minutes. Mr. Fisher moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Madaffer. By roll-call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve a Resolution Honoring Mr. Peter Nelson. Mr. Nelson commented that he valued his last four years as Chairman and appreciated the guidance of Board member Fisher in his role as former Chairman. Mr. Harris added that it is unique that the Board will have two emeritus chairs that are still sitting on the Board. Mr. Harris stated that the Board staff enjoyed working with Mr. Nelson, especially during tough times on the Colorado River. He stated that Mr. Nelson did a good job for the Board and the State of California.

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the Resolution Honoring Mr. Peter Nelson. Mr. Pettijohn moved that the Resolution be approved, seconded by Mr. Fisher. By roll-call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Hamby stated that he and Vice Chairman Madaffer developed a schedule for upcoming board meetings which includes traveling meetings. He explained that during the cooler months of January, February, October, and November meetings will be held in the desert region. During the months of April, May, July and August, meetings will be held in the coastal region. He explained further that on a quarterly basis, in March, June, and September meetings will consist of two-day meetings that include tours that meet the day before for a half-day and the meeting

will commence the following day at 10 a.m. Vice Chairman Madaffer added that the schedule will allow member agencies to share their projects and activities with each other. He stated that the March meeting would be held in San Diego and include a tour of the Carlsbad Desalination Plant and the Pure Water San Diego Project. He stated that a dinner is scheduled on Tuesday evening that will include a discussion of how San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) and the Otay Water District worked together to deliver water to Mexico during an emergency.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION FROM COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT**

Mr. Nelson thanked the Board for visiting Coachella and stated that he would be providing an overview of the history of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), the district's imported water supplies, and how CVWD is dealing with drought. Mr. Nelson reported that CVWD stretches from Desert Hot Springs in the northwest to the Salton Sea in the southeast, with a total area of over 1,000 square miles. CVWD is the largest domestic water supplier in the area and, along with the Desert Water Agency, provides the area's imported water supplies.

Mr. Nelson reported that CVWD has a five-member board, 570 employees, and a nearly \$500 million annual budget. CVWD provides service to over 100,000 domestic accounts, 98,000 wastewater accounts, and 1,300 canal connections. CVWD undertakes significant groundwater replenishment through four facilities, including the Tom E. Levy facility in the east valley and the Whitewater Spreading Basin in the northwest valley. He also reported that Coachella recycles approximately 85% of its wastewater.

Mr. Nelson reported that tourism in the Coachella Valley provides approximately \$6.9 billion to the economy, with hundreds of thousands of annual visitors for tennis and golf tournaments, festivals, and other events. He reported that agriculture provides about \$600 million of economic value annually, with dates, grapes, turf, bell peppers, citrus, lettuce, and carrots among the major crops.

Mr. Nelson described CVWD's non-groundwater supplies, which include a 330,000 AF entitlement to Colorado River water; 88,000 AF from the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) transfers; 20,000 AF through the 1988 MWD/IID conservation program, 35,000 AF through a transfer with MWD; 147,850 AF from the State Water Project; and 19,000 AF of local and recycled water.

Mr. Nelson reported that State Water Project (SWP) supplies have been diminishing in reliability over the past fifteen years. Prior to a 2007 ruling, CVWD averaged 89% of their SWP entitlement; after the ruling, the average SWP allocation has been 40%, with two years of only 5%. Mr. Nelson reported that CVWD doesn't have a physical connection to the SWP but instead

implements an exchange with MWD, with MWD taking CVWD's supply of SWP supplies and providing CVWD a like amount through the Colorado River Aqueduct. A component of this exchange is that MWD can store or withdraw water from CVWD's groundwater basin.

Mr. Nelson reported that CVWD has been recharging its groundwater basin, which serves many of its domestic customers, since 1918, when the district was formed. The Coachella Canal was completed in 1949, and in 1973, SWP deliveries began. Groundwater recharge capacity was expanded in a series of projects in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Mr. Nelson reported that in CVWD's highest year of groundwater recharge at the Whitewater facility, it recharged nearly 400,000 AF. However, he also noted that there are other years when little to no groundwater recharge occurs at the site. Mr. Nelson reported that the Mission Creek facility, completed in 2002, and the Tom E. Levy facility, completed in 2009, provide steady annual groundwater recharge. CVWD created another recharge station in 2019 in the Palm Desert area to address a groundwater depression zone.

Mr. Nelson reported that CVWD is moving forward with two projects in 2023 to improve its water management. In partnership with San Diego County Water Authority, Reclamation, and the San Luis Rey Band of Indians, CVWD will be removing 5 miles of damage-prone concrete lining on the Coachella Canal to create 728 AF of in-line storage. CVWD is also moving forward with the Oasis In-Lieu Recharge Project, which will replace groundwater pumping in the Oasis area with Colorado River surface supplies.

Mr. Nelson reported on CVWD's drought response activities, which include turf removal rebates as high as \$6 per square foot and tiered water rates and drought penalties to discourage overuse. He noted that the overall effect of these programs is water savings of nearly 120,000 AF per year. Additionally, agricultural best practices and canal lining save approximately 132,000 AF per year.

Mr. Nelson also noted that in 2022, CVWD curtailed its groundwater replenishment program by 9,000 AF, leaving the water in Lake Mead. CVWD is also pursuing approval for a plan to create up to 35,000 AF/yr in the interim period through the Colorado River Water Conservation Program. This will be in addition to CVWD's commitments under the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan (DCP), which range from 14,000-24,500 AF/yr.

Mr. Nelson reported that CVWD is involved in the Sites Reservoir project, north of the Delta, for a yield of 10,000 AF/yr. CVWD is also funding the Delta Conveyance Project, hoping to get an additional 19,000 AF/yr.

## **STATE AND LOCAL REPORTS**

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported that precipitation conditions were above average for most of the State. She stated that this year's winter weather has been coined "weather whiplash" because there have been a series of very wet storms up until mid-January and now it has been very dry since then. She stated that precipitation conditions in February will be below average and there is no precipitation forecast until the end of the month.

Ms. Jones reported that natural flow is a good indicator of snowpack and precipitation conditions. She displayed a figure showing the two driest years from the last drought and the driest year in the current drought. She stated that dry conditions persisted in the Shasta reservoir because it was not in the path of the winter storms, adding that the storms did not travel far north. Ms. Jones reported that it will be challenging to refill Shasta reservoir this year and will cause operational implications for the State and Federal Water projects.

Ms. Jones stated that DWR released the first round of the run-off forecast based on the February 1<sup>st</sup> snow survey and for most water sheds in the middle of the state precipitation is above average, while the Shasta watershed is only 94% of average. She added that it is likely that the run-off forecasts will decline due to the recent lack of precipitation, explaining that some of the forecasts support the determination of the water-year hydrologic classification types for Bay Delta regulatory purposes, which could ultimately impact water project operations. She stated that the Central Valley Project (CVP) filed a temporary urgency change petition with the State Water Board to preserve water in upstream reservoirs. She stated that the CVP will announce its initial allocations noting that they will be impacted by Shasta reservoirs current storage.

Ms. Jones reported that the State's reservoir storage and snowpack is doing well, especially in the middle region of the Sierra Nevada mountains. She noted that Shasta reservoir storage was down.

Vice Chairman Pettijohn, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that the Los Angeles aqueduct system is doing well. He stated that the snowpack was 173% of the April 1<sup>st</sup> normal and 234% of normal for this time of year. He noted that LADWP is anticipating the impact of the runoff, adding that for the past two years, runoff conditions have been dry.

Mr. Bill Hasencamp, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported that MWD has begun adding water back into local storage after drawing it down over the last few years. He added that water deliveries to agencies have declined due to the wet conditions.

### **COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORT**

Mr. Juricich reported that as of February 13<sup>th</sup>, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,522.33 feet with 5.39 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 23% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,047.49 feet with 7.50 MAF of storage, or 29% of capacity. He added that Lake Mead's elevation is about two feet above where it was last month. The total system storage was 19.04 MAF, or 33% of capacity, which is 2.67 MAF less than system storage at this time last year.

Mr. Juricich reported that as of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, for Water Year-2023 (WY-2023) the forecasted unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is 10.44 MAF, or 109% of normal. He reported that the forecasted April to July inflow into Lake Powell is 7.50 MAF, or 117% of normal. He stated that observed inflow into Lake Powell for January was 107% of normal and the February inflow forecast was 82% of normal.

Mr. Juricich reported on snow water equivalent (SWE) conditions throughout the Colorado River Basin. He noted that the Gila River and Verde River systems received over 150% of normal SWE. Mr. Harris added that the forecast shows that over the next seven to ten days there will be additional snow from southwestern Wyoming, Eastern Utah, and Western Colorado.

Board member Nelson inquired about the status of Arizona's water system, given the above average snowpack it has received. Mr. Harris explained that Arizona's Verde River system has a few smaller reservoirs that can receive the runoff but will spill and the runoff will travel to the mainstream Gila River and then travel down to a series of dams on the lower Salt River, culminating at the larger Roosevelt dam. He added that the dam is beneficial to the Phoenix Metropolitan area and there is connection to the Central Arizona Project (CAP) system. He reported that CAP does exchanges with this system to move water between CAP and the Salt River Project (SRP) system. Mr. Harris reported that the SRP has been releasing water from its reservoir as a flood control measure. He added that a portion of the runoff will be used to recharge the local aquifer in the Phoenix area which has been under active management since 1980. He explained further that if there is a good runoff year, some of the water may make it down to Painted Rock Reservoir, which is a U.S. Army Corps facility. He added that the runoff will

travel to meet with the mainstream Gila, and eventually the mainstream of the Colorado River. He stated that Reclamation tends to use this water to meet the Mexican Treaty delivery obligation, explaining that it helps “sweeten” up the saline water in the region. Mr. Harris stated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Alamo Dam is also being monitored for potential spills, noting that the spilled water would also reach the Colorado mainstream at Lake Havasu, right above Parker Dam. Mr. Harris added that in Arizona, extra water is stored in its aquifer, but they will continue to use as much CAP water as allowed. He stated there was only one year, 2005, when Arizona had so much extra water that they reduced their demand on CAP.

Mr. Juricich reported on projections from the January and February 24-Month Studies. He stated that the impact of the January storms are starting to reflect in the projections. He stated that Lake Powell’s elevation was 3,550 feet at the end of December. He stated that in 2024, Lake Powell’s elevation is projected to be 3,568 feet, noting this improvement in elevation is likely due to recent storm activity. He stated that the most probable release for Lake Powell is 7.77 MAF in WY-2023 and 7.48 MAF in WY-2024. He stated an adjustment in April would codify the WY-2023 balancing release. Mr. Juricich reported that Lake Mead’s elevation will fall below the critical elevation of 1,025 feet in 2024. He added that the impact of the most probable inflow scenario is reflected at elevation 1,033 feet in Lake Mead.

Mr. Harris stated that the most probable inflow scenario considers the 2022 and 2023 drought response releases. He stated that it does not anticipate another drought release next year or California’s contribution of 400,000 AF. He added that it only includes actions from signed agreements that have been modeled by Reclamation. He added the most probable inflow scenario also considers soil moisture. He stated that going into this winter season there were dry soil conditions across the Basin. However, due to recent storm activity, it is anticipated that runoff might be more efficient. He noted that the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center (CBRFC) updates is modeling data of streamflow and soil moisture conditions periodically and this data is fed into the Colorado River Mid-Term Modeling System (CRMMS) model.

Mr. Juricich reported that at the end of January, Reclamation released the CRMMS-ESP 5-Year projection for Lakes Powell and Mead. He reported that in 2024, 53% of the traces project that Lake Powell’s elevation will be in the Mid-Elevation Release Tier and 37% of traces project Lake Powell’s elevation will be in the Lower Elevation Balancing Tier, below the critical elevation of 3,525 ft. He explained that in the out years of 2025 and 2026, the percentage of traces in the Lower Elevation Balancing tier declines.

Mr. Juricich reported that 5-Year projections for Lake Mead show that in 2024 about 80% of the traces show Lake Mead’s elevation range between 1,050 ft and 1,025 ft. In the out years,

2025 and 2026 the number of traces within the same elevation range declines, but still accounts for about half (53%) of the traces. He stated that in 2024 to 2026, 7% of the traces are with the Normal or ICS Surplus conditions with an elevation at or above 1,075 feet.

Mr. Juricich reported that through the end of January the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 1,712 AF and 5,405 AF, respectively. He also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico were 7,987 AF, compared to 272 AF this time last year. Finally, the total amount of saline drainage water bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 16,407 AF.

### **COLORADO RIVER BASIN STATES ACTIVITIES**

Mr. Harris reported that California has been working with colleagues in the other Basin States in an effort to develop a consensus-based modeling framework to be used in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) currently under development by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). The SEIS would potentially modify operations at Lakes Powell and Mead for the remaining term of the 2007 Interim Guidelines. Mr. Harris reported that the states met numerous times in the previous month to discuss components of a proposal, including potential operational and administrative actions. Mr. Harris noted that, unfortunately, the Basin States were not able to reach agreement before the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline to submit comments to Reclamation.

Mr. Harris reported that six of the Basin States submitted a proposal and California submitted a separate proposal. He noted that the plans share many commonalities, including maximum Lower Basin and Mexico reductions of approximately 3.3 MAF and protection of elevation 1,000' in Lake Mead and elevation 3,500' in Lake Powell. However, the methods used to implement the reductions were significantly different. The six-state submittal proposed fairly static Lake Powell operations, limited actions in the Upper Basin, and the utilization of a so-called "evaporation and system loss" assessment to water users in the Lower Basin and Mexico. The California submittal proposed use of voluntary and compensated reductions, water transfers, and adherence to the priority system, as well as more rigorous contributions from the Upper Basin.

Mr. Harris reported that California's delegation brought a reasonable proposal to the final Basin States meeting before the January submittal deadline, but the proposal was roundly rejected by the other states. He noted that California's delegation then tried extremely hard to reach a compromise position with the other states at that meeting but weren't met with much flexibility in the six-state proposal.



Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation has since reached out to both the six-state group and California to clarify the details of the proposals and the modeling assumptions included within them. He stated that both proposals, as well as a likely Reclamation proposal, would be analyzed in the draft SEIS expected in March or April. The SEIS would then be available for public comment, with a final SEIS and Record of Decision expected by the end of July, to be utilized in the August 24-Month Study and operational determinations for WY-2024.

Mr. Harris reported that the Basin States have resumed discussions since the submittal of the two proposals in an attempt to find areas of commonality that could inform the final SEIS. Chairman Hamby reported that there seems to be a recommitment on the part of the other Lower Basin states to reengage on a consensus Lower Basin plan.

Mr. Fisher stated that he believed California had done a good job of conveying the state's position and that the position had been well received.

Chairman Hamby noted that it was disappointing that the six-state proposal was released a day early and only hours after California first saw the proposal in writing. He noted that although it is easy to target California because of its comparably large water allocation, other states need to demonstrate their commitment to the sort of massive, long-term transfers that California has been implementing for more than twenty years.

In response to a question from Mr. Fisher, Mr. Harris noted that Senator Hickenlooper (D-CO) had suggested establishment of a Senate Colorado River Caucus. He noted that both of California's senators attended the kickoff meeting of the caucus and that the senators are attempting to serve as facilitators in finding a collaborative, consensus-based solution. It was unclear whether the Colorado River Caucus would be formal or informal. Mr. Harris reported that the group isn't currently discussing legislation but is focused on bringing federal resources to bear on Basin issues.

Mr. Nelson noted that, in the past, there has been pushback from the Upper Basin on the idea of compensating short-term conservation in the Lower Basin. He noted that, given the emergency need for a large increase in conservation, compensation was necessary. Mr. Harris reported that Reclamation recently finalized granting approximately \$150 million for the Upper Basin System Conservation Program, to incentivize Upper Basin conservation activities. Mr. Harris noted that this was a step in the right direction.

Mr. Nelson asked whether there has been news of a similar caucus in the House. Mr. Harris reported that there has not yet been, but that with the recent change in leadership in the House, the House was currently focused on committee leadership and other activities.

Ms. Jones noted that the Western States Water Council formed its own Colorado River Caucus in 2021. The Council plans to hold its annual meeting in California in August 2023, and

Ms. Jones stated that this might be a good opportunity to engage with that group. Ms. Meena Westford stated that the group would be in the Los Angeles area and touring the Pure Water Southern California facility.

#### Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program Implementation

Mr. Juricich provided a summary of the activities of the Salinity Control Forum Work Group meeting held February 7-9 in Palm Desert at the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD). The focus of the meeting was to review the draft results to be included in the 2023 Triennial Review of water quality standards for salinity in the Colorado River System. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act requires that at least once every three years the Basin States review water quality standards relating to the salinity of the Colorado River. The work group also received updates from federal agencies funding program implementation or conducting research on salinity control activities. During the meeting, an update was provided on the status of the Paradox Valley Unit Salinity Control Project. The Work Group also toured CVWD facilities and Salton Sea dust control sites. The Work Group was really appreciative of CVWD's offer to host the meeting and provide meeting support.

Mr. Juricich thanked CVWD for making their facility available for the Work Group meeting, and he stated that Robert Cheng did a great job getting the Work Group set up to use the room and helping with the tour. Mr. Juricich explained that the Paradox Valley Project has been operational for six months. Reclamation shut the project down for a month, but it's back up and running again. It is expected that moving forward the project will operate at six-month intervals. There might be a few weeks shutdown in between the 6-month operations while Reclamation checks data and does any maintenance they need to do. Mr. Juricich stated that there is less encouraging news about progress from Reclamation on a long-term alternative to the brine injection well at Paradox. Reclamation discussed the concept of applying a Statement of Objective approach over a year ago, but little progress has been made. Mr. Juricich also thanked key staff involved with putting on a tour for the Work Group including Robert Cheng, Don Charlton, and Chad Austin with CVWD, and Jessica Hume with Imperial Irrigation District.

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

Ms. Neuwerth reported that Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management (GCDAMP) held a three-day meeting in January to discuss research and science that has happened over the past year.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that warmer water and more fish are moving through the dam. Smallmouth bass, a voracious predator in the Upper Basin, have spawned below the dam. Ms. Neuwerth noted that the stretch of Colorado River below the dam has been a stronghold of native fish in the basin and may be impacted by smallmouth bass. Monitoring in previous years has detected four or five smallmouth bass compared to 300 caught in the previous year. Intensive removal was conducted, and the effectiveness of these efforts is being evaluated.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that other efforts include looking at installing a net in Lake Powell to prevent fish passage through the turbines and that Reclamation is working on an Environmental Assessment to potentially modify the release patterns from Glen Canyon Dam. Ms. Neuwerth reminded the Board that '07 Guidelines and new SEIS set annual releases for Glen Canyon Dam and the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) governs shorter releases. The flows being considered would produce high flows and/or pass water through the bypass tubes. Ms. Neuwerth explained that passing water through the bypass tubes brings cooler water through the dam without generating hydropower. Reducing hydropower generation is a concern. There is a potentially small window to stop the smallmouth bass population from taking off.

A question was asked regarding if efforts at Flaming Gorge led to being able to manage the smallmouth population below Flaming Gorge Dam. Ms. Neuwerth replied that the flow efforts are disadvantaging the smallmouth bass but that the population is still there. Ms. Neuwerth added that Flaming Gorge was built with a selective intake to control water temperature which is not a tool available at Glen Canyon Dam.

Ms. Neuwerth explained that the impacts from nonnative fish will take time to show up in the native fish population. Humpback chub, the main species of nonnative fish, are doing well near Western Grand Canyon and near the Little Colorado River.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that a high flow experiment has not been conducted recently due to nonnative fish concerns.

#### Status of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Ms. Neuwerth reported that the program manager and deputy program manager both left the program last year. There is a new program manager who was the longtime restoration group manager.

Ms. Neuwerth reported that work is underway to obtain coverage for reductions in flow that may result from the SEIS. The LCR MSCP provides Endangered Species Act coverage for reduced flows in the Lower Colorado River.

## **MEMBER AGENCY REPORTS**

### **Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)**

Board member Pettijohn reported that the Donald C. Tillman water reclamation plant will provide about 17,000 af/year of water to recharge the San Fernando groundwater basin, providing enough water for 200,000 residents. He added that the plant will cost half a billion dollars.

Board member Pettijohn reported that LADWP will build underground storm water capture projects at nine parks in San Fernando Valley using Measure W funds. He explained that Measure W passed in Los Angeles and is essentially a property tax. He reported that the project will create about 3,000 af of capacity to capture stormwater, noting that it doesn't translate directly into infiltration because it depends on how many rain events occur. He stated that the project will cost about \$504 million and will help LADWP reach a goal to triple the amount of stormwater capture within Los Angeles between now and 2035. He stated that LADWP started out at 6,000 af of stormwater capture capacity and will try to increase it to 18,000 af of capacity.

Board member Pettijohn reported that LADWPS's water conservation unit has been enforcing the emergency water conservation program. He stated that from July 2022 through the end of January 2023 LADWP has received 13,000 reports of water waste. He stated that the enforcement team writes citations and informs people about how to comply with the ordinance which limits outdoor watering to two days a week, eight minutes a station. He noted that water use in Los Angeles is 108 gpcd and they would like to reduce it to 100 gpcd. He added that LADWP is continuing to support residents converting their lawns to California friendly landscape. He stated that LADWP offers \$5 per square foot for residential customers and \$6 per square foot for commercial customers, noting that the program rivals Coachella Valley Water District landscape conversion program. He reported that LADWP has done over 100,000 af of hardware-based conservation such as replacements of toilets, washing machines and cooling towers. He stated that LADWP has spent about \$30 million a year on conservation and MWD also offers subsidies for the devices that LADWP replaces.

Board member Pettijohn reported that LADWP is conducting a pilot study on a 1-million gallon a day (MGD) Membrane Bioreactor Pilot Facility at Hyperion Wastewater Treatment Plant in collaboration with West Basin District, MWD, and Los Angeles County Sanitation District. He also reported on the proposed 1.5 MGD Advanced Water Purification Facility project that will produce recycled water for the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant and the Los Angeles World Airports for non-potable water use. He noted that there is also a Pure Water Facility in San Diego.

He stated that the project is a multi-billion-dollar effort to advance treat all the water that goes to the largest wastewater facility in Los Angeles. He stated that the project is a similar size to the Pure Water SoCal project at the Los Angeles County Sanitation Plant, which MWD is partnering on.

#### The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)

Ms. Cordero reported that MWD held a two-day retreat for MWD Board members and agency members. She stated that the retreat gave them the opportunity to understand the differences between smaller and larger agencies and how they have been dealing with uncertainty. She reported that the retreat started with a land acknowledgment of the Pechanga Tribe, and then it was followed by an introduction of Chairman Mark Macarro, who provided a historical analysis of what happened in the area and the implications.

Ms. Cordero reported that MWD is receiving \$80 million from the State to accelerate the Pure Water pilot project.

Ms. Cordero stated that MWD will move out of the emergency conservation program for six million customers. MWD will continue to be aggressive in its conservation efforts. There is still high demand for turf replacement and rebates. She concluded that MWD has also started work on several capital improvement projects that will support their efforts towards resiliency.

#### San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that seven new directors joined the SDCWA Board from their member agencies. He stated that Ms. Lois Fong Sakai, SDCWA director, was elected secretary of the MWD Board.

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that SDCWA had an opportunity to spend time with the MWD Chairman, Adan Ortega. He noted that MWD and SDCWA have experienced acrimony in the past but hopes to resolve these issues going forward.

Vice Chairman Madaffer concluded by stating that SDCWA will provide a special presentation during the next traveling Board meeting which about SDCWA's efforts to deliver emergency water to Mexico.

### Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID)

Mr. Echard displayed a photo of the upstream location of the PVID diversion dam in Palo Verde. He stated that the river at this location was very low in January, adding that is usually when they do maintenance on the system. He explained that there is a “rock” weir just above the dam where PVID used to divert its water supply for valley and the photo shows remnants of the “rock” weir. Board member Fisher explained further that when the Bureau of Indian Affairs built the Headgate Rock Dam for the CRIT Indian Tribe, suddenly Palo Verde’s diversion and the Valley were without water for weeks. He stated that there were threats of lawsuit against the Department of the Interior (DOI). He stated that DOI decided to add truckload after truckload of rock that spanned the entire river that caused the water to elevate and flow once again through PVID’s diversion. He stated that there were acres of vegetables in the Valley that went without water for about three weeks. He added that when the Laguna Dam was put into service, the water backed up behind the dam and flooded the many acres of land on the south end of the Valley. He stated that once again crops died, and Reclamation had to dredge the river to lower the water to allow the resumption of water flow to agriculture on the south end of the valley. Mr. Harris added that Reclamation did a massive channelization effort and levy configuration in the Palo Verde Valley to restore drainage.

Mr. Echard stated that PVID coordinates with CRIT when they are performing their canal maintenance. He added that decades ago, the rock weir failed and PVID received funding to construct the Palo Verde diversion dam. Board member Fisher stated the diversion dam is on the only structure in the Lower Basin that spans the river and is not owned by Reclamation, adding that PVID has the deed for it.

### California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mr. Vigil with the CDFW provided an update to the Board of the new Motus wildlife tracking system. Motus is an international collection of radio towers for tracking wildlife movement. CDFW bought about fifteen of them through the Canvas Program, to look at impacts on the Canvas, and the movements of animals. One of the systems was installed at the Palo Verde Ecological Reserve on February 2, 2023. Mr. Vigil displayed a map showing the distribution of towers across North and South America. The program is relatively cheap, and each tower has a six-mile detection range. Mr. Vigil reported that a researcher from the Lower Colorado Multi-Species Program is looking into a three-year project using Motus for southwestern willow flycatchers.

## California Department of Water Resources

Ms. Jones provided an update to the Board on the recent drought executive order from the Governor. The new order extends the ability to do a temporary urgency change permit to conserve water. The major new feature in the order is for expediting water recharge. Back in the last drought, the State Water Board began a program to allow for temporary urgent recharge projects, generally six months in duration, intended for wet winters, like the one we've just had. DWR will do the water availability analysis part, and the State Water Board will do the regulatory part. The first six-month permit under the program was recently executed. DWR is focusing on the northern end of the San Joaquin Valley where there's a lot of snowpack that's going to cause flood control problems when it melts and is also an area critical for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act areas.

## Imperial Irrigation District

Ms. Shields referenced the Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) New River Diversion project. Ms. Shields participated in a project tour by the Department of Water Resources as they rediverted water at the Salton Sea SCH Management Project location. The DWR project is creating nearly 4,000 acres of wetlands. Last year, DWR bypassed the New River to build the turnout to the wetlands and a new weir structure. Ms. Shields stated it is expected that the State will double the size of this project and push it farther to the northeast, expanding the site to closer to 8,000 acres. The project includes a peninsula built to run a pipeline out and a pump station four miles out from the seashore in anticipation of future shoreline recession. The project will pump in saltwater from the Sea and blend it with the New River water to achieve the desired salinity levels and dilute the salt water down sufficiently to allow the fish to reproduce again. IID is talking to DWR about relocating its elevation sensor because it's getting silted out as the shoreline is receding. Ms. Shields expects DWR will be doing more public tours as they work to put the water into the wetlands complex. She was not sure when that would happen, but it should be sometime this year. It is expected that a public viewing area will be developed for the location.

## **GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES**

Chairman Hamby stated that the Monthly Report includes a detailed summary of the Washington D.C. report.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.