

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

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (Board) was held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at the San Diego County Water Authority, 4677 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)

John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)

Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)

Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)

Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)

Glen D. Peterson (MWD)

Jack Seiler (PVID Alternate)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Gary Croucher (SDCWA Alternate)

Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)

David De Jesus (MWD Alternate)

James Hanks (IID Alternate)

Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)

David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)

Peter Nelson (CVWD)

David Vigil (DFW Alternate)

Others Present:

Nick Bahr

Gloria Cordero

Dennis Davis

Dan Denham

Gina Dockstader

Jackie Duran

JR Echard

David Edwards

Tom Eib

Craig Elmore

Ray Face

Chris Harris

Alex Heide

Geoff Holbrook

Rich Juricich

Sandy Kerl

Aaron Mead

Jessica Neuwerth

Shana Rapoport

David Rheinheimer

Eric Ruckdaschel

Alexi Schnell

Tina Shields

Peter Silva

Darren Simon

Cesar Solis

Gary Tavetian

Meena Westford

Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hamby announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that before the meeting, there was tour of two SDCWA facilities that highlight investments made toward drought-resilient water supplies in the San Diego region. He stated that the first stop of the tour was to the Carlsbad Desalination Plant, which came online in 2015 and produces over a hundred billion gallons of fresh drinking water. He added that the plant allows SDCWA to offset its Colorado River water use. He stated that the tour also visited the construction site of the East County Advanced Purification Program, which will produce 30% of the east county's drinking water demand. Construction of the facility will be completed in 2026.

## **REMARKS FROM CONGRESSMAN SCOTT PETERS**

Vice Chairman Madaffer introduced Congressman Scott Peters and stated he and Congressman Peters met each other on the campaign trail in 1999, when they were both running for the San Diego City Council. He stated that they served together for eight years from 2000 to 2008. He added that Congressman Peters was elected in 2012 for Congress and represents the 50<sup>th</sup> Congressional district which includes the cities of Coronado, San Marcos, Escondido, and Coastal San Diego. He stated Congressman Peters serves on the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee, House Budget Committee, and the House Equality Caucus. Vice Chairman Madaffer stated that Mr. Peters is focused on practical climate change policies and promotes San Diego's activities in innovation.

Vice Chairman Madaffer stated that Congressman Peters also advocates for San Diego's pivotal role as a partner in national defense. He stated that Congressman Peters was with President Biden earlier in the week. He added that Congressman Peters understands that problems have bi-partisan solutions and is never afraid to work across party lines to get things done.

Congressman Peters stated that he is a big fan of Vice Chairman Madaffer and that he was a driver of much of the energy on the San Diego City Council. He added that his staff from Washington D.C accompanied him on this trip, and some of them are working on water issues. He also stated that he hoped that his discussion today would be a two-way discussion that would hopefully educate himself and the Board. He stated the Colorado River Basin provides water for 40 million people, with 20 million people living in Southern California and of that, 3 million live in

San Diego County. He stated that the Colorado River's annual flow has decreased over the past few decades due to the worst drought in the last 120 years. He stated it would take five or more years of increased rain to help alleviate the drought in the Colorado River Basin. He stated that Lake Powell's elevation is declining and getting closer to a dead pool situation. He remains optimistic that a solution will be found.

Congressman Peters addressed some of the solutions SDCWA has implemented to address challenging water situation, such as water transfers from Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and desalination. He stated that he and Vice Chairman Madaffer were early proponents of "black-water" recycling. He stated that San Diego County has also reduced its water demand, noting that water use is down by 40% between 1990 and 2022. He stated that California farms are adopting methods to conserve water and make crops more resilient to drought, which will protect the industry from drought field losses, protect jobs and conserving water while maintaining a thriving agricultural economy—which is essential to California. He stated that one-third of the country's vegetables, and three-quarters of the country's fruits, and nuts are grown in California. He stated that his top priority, going forward, is for San Diego, Sacramento, and Washington to work together to finalize a consensus-based approach to maintain California's water use rights along the Colorado River. He stated that California has been a model in investments in water recycling, water conservation and efficiency and other states should do the same.

Congressman Peters stated that the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Congress provided \$4 billion in drought relief funds that can be used for land fallowing, canal lining, land leveling and installation of drain ditches, in the agricultural sector, and in urban areas, the funds can be used for turf replacement and installation of drought tolerant landscaping. He stated that he would like to use his remaining speaking time to hear from the Board about which projects should be part of federal funding. He stated that he would like to know how federal legislatures can support a "Seven-state" solution and other steps the federal government can take to be more supportive.

Chairman Hamby remarked that a few weeks ago he travelled to Washington, D.C to provide a briefing for members of the California delegation and their staff on Colorado River Basin issues and how California is dealing with them. He stated that California has stepped up and committed an additional 400,000 AF per year of water conservation over the next few years on top of the existing Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan obligations. He stated that California has also been collaborating effectively with its sister states and water users across the Basin, particularly in the Lower Basin. Chairman Hamby stated that the federal government could help with assisting Arizona in developing a robust set of water management strategies and activities similar to California's Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), adopted in 2003. He stated

that there are a number of tribes that are dependent on water supplies from the Central Arizona Project (CAP) and those obligations and commitments need to be back-stopped so Arizona can be provided with the certainty it needs going forward in this era of limited supplies. He stated that everyone needs to be more efficient about how Colorado River water is used. He stated that the winter hydrology season has been phenomenally good within California and across the Colorado River Basin, but these conditions will not address long-term challenges.

Congressman Peters inquired whether the counterparts in Arizona have considered this issue. Vice Chairman Madaffer stated that there is a receptiveness within Arizona to developing a plan similar to the QSA, but it will require funding and a real commitment by the Department of the Interior (DOI) leadership to step in and help guide the process. He added he believed that California would be supportive of the development of the plan. Congressman Peters remarked that it is important for the Board and other stakeholders to reach out to and educate members of Congress and their staff about these issues to build relationships with them. Vice Chairman Madaffer stated that Ms. Tina Shields from Imperial Irrigation District (IID), presented to the House of Representatives on California's Colorado River issues. He added that the trip brought together staff from IID, SDCWA, and The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) to meet with Congress to discuss and find solutions to Colorado River issues.

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), stated that more funding is needed for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for precipitation forecasting. She stated that California's "whiplash" weather this year, shows that better long-range forecasting is needed. She stated that California's Senators have written a letter requesting additional funding for NOAA, stating that she would like Congressman Peters' signature on the letter.

Congressman Peters remarked that it is not always necessary to travel to Washington, DC to educate Congress members about these issues and recommended meeting with them via Zoom. Executive Director Harris added that he speaks with staff from Senators Feinstein and Padilla twice a month and offered Congressman Peters updates to his staff as well.

Board member Fisher thanked Congressman Peters for his comments and stated that he was a farmer. He stated that agriculture is the only sector that can contribute to the diminished flows of the Colorado River. He added that this is a difficult solution for many disadvantaged communities that are dependent on agricultural production to fuel their local economies. He stated that farmers are compensated for providing conserved water, but it diminishes the local economies of many disadvantaged, Hispanic communities, which do not have voice about these issues. Congressman Peters stated that he would like to better understand the issue. Board

member Fisher stated there is a lot funding to find solutions to Colorado River issues and funding should also be made available to disadvantaged communities dealing with these issues as well.

Chairman Hamby thanked Congressman Peters for his time and noted the development of the current Farm bill. He stated it there should be more western provisions in the Farm bill given the drought issues. He stated that the CRB staff are working with Senators Feinstein and Padilla and other delegations of California and Colorado to request additional resources in the Farm bill to address year-term agricultural water contributions.

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that when he, Mr. Alex Cardenas, Chair of the IID Board and Mr. Adan Ortega, Chair of the MWD Board, met with the Council on Environmental Quality at the White House, they addressed some of the environmental and social justice issues that exist in the Imperial Valley. He stated that they emphasized the importance of these issues such as the Salton Sea, and the need for funding to address these issues. He added that supporting the agricultural sector in the Imperial Valley will not only benefit the region, but also the nation, as it benefits from the agricultural production from the region. Congressman Peters noted that there is a new Congressman representing the California-Mexico border region and other Congress members in the region that are concerned with issues related to the Salton Sea and public health.

Ms. Meena Westford representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, asked about Congressman Peters climate change agenda. Congressman Peters stated that \$360 billion has been allocated for climate change in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), adding that the funds need to be put to use. He stated that the size of the electric grid needs to be increased and infrastructure such as hydrogen pipelines and direct air capture should be built to combat climate change. He added that additional water infrastructure is needed to mitigate climate impacts such as stormwater capture. He stated that he is working on a regulatory regime that would help get climate change projects to be developed more efficiently. He stated that the National Environmental Policy Act was passed in 1970, and Congress is legislating these issues with policy that does not match today's problems.

Congressman Peters stated he and the Speaker of the House, Mr. Kevin McCarthy, are working on legislation that would address the loss of Sequoia trees due to wildfires. He remarked that California lost its first Sequoia tree in 750 years in 2017 due to a Pine tree next to the Sequoia that carried the fire up into the tree canopy, adding that California lost 19% of Sequoias in this manner over the last three years. He added that he and Speaker McCarthy are looking at ways to get this legislation to move forward before more Sequoia trees are lost. He added that if Congress believes that climate advocacy is important, legislation and policies need to be changed to move things forward.

## **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. Hearing none, he moved on to the next item on the agenda.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the January 11, 2023, Board meeting minutes. Mr. Fisher moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Madaffer. By roll-call vote, the minutes were approved with an abstention from Board member Peterson.

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATION FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY**

General Manager Sandy Kerl provided a welcome presentation to the Board with an overview of the SDCWA strategic investments including local surface storage, the Carlsbad Desalination plant, water conservation initiatives, water transfers and canal linings, and potable water reuse. The per capita water use in the San Diego region has declined by 43% since 1990. SDCWA is also investing in an energy storage project at the San Vicente reservoir. SDCWA is also evaluating the potential to expand the Carlsbad Desalination plant to support management of the Colorado River.

## **STATE AND LOCAL REPORTS**

Ms. Jones, representing the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), reported that statewide reservoir storage is very close to average for this time of the year. She stated the storage numbers will change over the next few weeks as major reservoirs begin flood control measures, starting on March 15<sup>th</sup>. She noted that out of all the reservoirs, Lake Shasta's storage is lagging because the snowpack in the northern Sierra has not been as abundant as the southern Sierra Mountain range.

Ms. Jones reported that statewide precipitation conditions are 141% of average and stated that statewide snowpack is ranked second in terms of all-time record snowpack. She noted however, that the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains have record snowpack which brings significant flood control challenges in the San Joaquin River system because the capacity of the river is very small. Ms. Jones added that when comparing the full natural flow into the reservoir system over the last two years to natural flow in 2023, all the reservoirs have inflows between 100% and 150% of average, with the exception of Shasta reservoir.

Board member Peterson, representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), reported the Table A allocation for the State Water Project (SWP) is 35%. He stated that MWD is currently discussing receiving Title 21 water.

Mr. Peterson stated that MWD is in the process of filling Diamond Valley Lake reservoir. MWD's total reservoir storage is 63% of capacity. He added that he anticipates storage to decline by the end of this year. He stated that MWD's service area is still vulnerable to swings in water availability, and it is incumbent on MWD to develop more local water and rely less on imported water. Mr. Peterson reported that water sales have declined, and it anticipated that sales data from February will also decline due to wet weather. He added that MWD plans to put water in storage in the Desert Coachella replenishment aquifers, adding that 211,000 af is scheduled for replenishment at the end of March.

Alternate Board member Delon Kwan, representing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), reported that precipitation conditions in the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains are 275% normal to date and 258% of the April 1<sup>st</sup> normal. He stated that snow melt has begun at elevations that range between 4,000 to 6,000 feet in the Owens Valley. He stated that in 1969, there was historic snow water equivalent (SWE) of 66 inches, noting that the current SWE is 57.8 inches and may increase to above 60" by April 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated that 2017 also had historic SWE and runoff was about one million acre-feet. He stated that if there is similar runoff, LADWP may have to shift to flood management mode on the aqueduct system. He stated that LADWP is anticipating a similar runoff amount this year. Mr. Kwan stated that the Los Angeles aqueduct provides regional and storage benefits.

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

Mr. Juricich reported that as of March 6<sup>th</sup>, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,520.81 feet with 5.31 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 23% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,046.87 feet with 7.46 MAF of storage, or 29% of capacity. He noted that Lake Mead's elevation has been holding steady at 1,046 feet for the past few months. The total system storage was 18.89 MAF, or 32% of capacity, which is 2.50 MAF less than system storage at this time last year.

Mr. Juricich reported that as of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, for Water Year-2023 (WY-2023) the forecasted unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is 10.87 MAF, or 113% of normal. He reported that the forecasted April to July inflow into Lake Powell is 8.0 MAF, or 125% of normal. He stated that observed inflow into Lake Powell for February was 74% of normal and the March inflow forecast

was 75% of normal. He added that runoff is below normal in February and March because much of the snowpack in the upper watersheds has not melted yet due to colder temperatures over the past few months.

Mr. Juricich reported that SWE conditions throughout the Colorado River Basin are normal to above normal. Mr. Harris added that SWE conditions in Arizona along the headwaters of Verde, Salt, and Gila River system are above 150% of normal. He added that these systems are important to Arizona's overall portfolio and that the reservoirs in the Salt River Project and Gila River system are expected to receive 250,000 AF of runoff. He stated that the Verde River system is also expected to receive a large portion of the runoff as well. He stated that this is good news for Arizona, and it will expand the state's flexibility over the next couple of years. Mr. Harris added that flood control operations have begun on the Verde River system and the systems of Horseshoe and Bartlett. Responding to a question from Chairman Hamby about Arizona's flood control operations, he stated that the Roosevelt Lake on the Salt River Project can hold a large amount of water and does not have to conduct flood control measures. He added that the Horseshoe reservoir on the Verde River system will need to raise the dam due to sedimentation issues, because it has lost capacity over time. He stated that the large amount of runoff in Arizona may not make it to Painted Rock reservoir but may flow into the reservoir on the upper reach of the San Carlos Reservoir at Coolidge Dam.

Chairman Hamby inquired to Mr. Juricich and Board member Jones about the connection between the atmospheric rivers that California experiences and its impact on the Colorado River Basin. Board member Jones stated that atmospheric rivers (ARs) make up about 40% of California's water supply but declines rapidly as you move eastward because ARs only make it eastward if they can pass through the terrain gaps. Ms. Jones reported that work from NOAA showed that ARs were responsible for 25% to 30% of the Colorado River Basin snowpack, but ARs only account for 10% of runoff. She noted that ARs are more significant to precipitation in Arizona.

Board member Peterson inquired about the impact of El Nino conditions. Ms. Jones remarked that when the science community first discovered ENSO, the El Niño Southern Oscillation, they thought they had solved the problems in terms of forecasting, however, this was incorrect. She stated that ENSO has an effect primarily for the extreme southern tier of the United States, especially Texas and Florida. She added that in California, the only phase of ENSO, that has any impact is La Nina, which usually indicates dry conditions in southern California. She stated that it is a coincidence that that last few El Nino years in California were very wet years, and the news media has held on to that concept for several years. She reported that in reality, El Nino has no signal for the Upper Colorado River Basin. She stated that there is also no relationship



between El Nino and ARs. Mr. Juricich noted that La Nina conditions have ended, and ENSO is moving toward neutral conditions.

Mr. Juricich reported on WY-2023 snowpack conditions, stating that SWE conditions in March were above normal across the Colorado River Basin. He reiterated that runoff conditions are below normal but should increase in the spring as temperatures rise and snowmelt begins.

Mr. Juricich reported on the January and February CRMMS projections, stating that the March 24-Month Study would be released later today. He stated that the March projection for the most probable release from Lake Powell this year has been increased to 7.823 MAF. He added that this is about 100,000 AF more than the previous probable release from the February 24-Month study. He stated that most of the traces for Lake Powell's End-of-Month Elevations are in the Mid-Elevation Release Tier in the first half of 2024 and then the traces move into the Upper Elevation Balancing Tier for the second half of 2024. He stated that Lake Mead's projections have not yet benefited from the improved water supply conditions and the projections are impacted by a Lake Powell projected release of 7.0 MAF in 2022.

Mr. Juricich reported that through the end of February the Brock and Senator Wash regulating reservoirs captured 12,172 AF and 13,164 AF, respectively. He also reported that the excess deliveries to Mexico were 9,913 AF, compared to 643 AF this time last year. Finally, the total amount of saline drainage water bypassed to the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico was 28,397 AF.

## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN STATES ACTIVITIES**

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

Ms. Rapoport reported that the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management (GCDAMP) held a meeting in Tempe, AZ from February 15 to 16.

Ms. Rapoport reported that the program remains heavily focused on non-native fish and smallmouth bass.

Ms. Rapoport reported that the AMWG advanced a nonnative fish strategic plan to the Secretary of the Interior. The purpose of the plan is to try and keep smallmouth bass from

establishing a population below Glen Canyon Dam and potentially causing problems for endangered fish.

Ms. Rapoport reported that the AMWG discussed the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for small bass environmental flows that was released by Reclamation. The EA includes four flow options that attempt to prevent smallmouth bass spawning by varying options to cool down temperatures and utilize spike flows to disrupt nesting. The seven basin states submitted a joint comment letter.

Ms. Rapoport reported that the AMWG received a report on an ongoing effort by Reclamation to potentially install a fish exclusion device. Either a net or curtain is being considered to prevent fish passage through the dam. Installation is anticipated in 2024 or 2025, most likely 2025.

Mr. Harris inquired as to how a net would be installed that reached from the water surface to the bottom of the lake. Ms. Rapoport replied that the device would stretch across the lake but would only reach to a depth where fish are found rather than to the bottom of the lake. Ms. Rapoport added that additional understanding is needed regarding how a curtain would not affect flows and would survive the flow through the area. This will be considered further as there are some opinions that a curtain may be more effective at preventing smallmouth passage than a net.

Ms. Rapoport reported that the AMWG directed the Technical Work Group (TWG) to consider options to re-evaluate the triggers for high flow experiments. There is quite a lot of sediment built up in the system since there has not been a high flow experiment for some time. The TWG is looking at how the accounting window can potentially be revised and the best timing for future experiments.

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

Ms. Rapoport reported that the Financial Work Group of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program met virtually on February 23. The group went through the FY 2022 budget which was set at \$25.4 million.

Ms. Rapoport reported that the program has had some delays due to staff turnover but remains on track.

Ms. Rapoport reported that overall spending for the program is decreasing as there is less need for research as the program matures and moves into a maintenance phase.

Ms. Rapoport reported that the budget for FY 2023 is \$24 million.

Chairman Hamby inquired regarding a picture in the presentation. Ms. Neuwerth replied that the picture is of the Mohave Valley backwater. It's a fully constructed backwater adjacent to the river and located on the California side of the river.

## **MEMBER AGENCY REPORTS**

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

Board member Peterson reported that MWD is replacing the overhead bridge cranes for all five Colorado River aqueducts, stating that they were installed over 93 years ago. He reported that the Colorado River Aqueduct shut down was completed in March. He added that 300 hundred employees and contractors successfully coordinated to safely complete the critical work needed to keep the 90-year-old aqueduct system working.

Board member Peterson stated that the MWD Board voted to remove the water shortage emergency conditions for the SWP dependent areas.

Board member Peterson stated that MWD participated in a trip to Washington, D.C. in coordination with the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), stating the Colorado River Basin issues were top of mind. He added that it was great to see the California Congress members speaking with one voice on this issue.

Board member Peterson reported that the San Francisco Superior Court ruled in favor for MWD in the case with San Diego County Water Authority regarding offset benefits. He stated that he hopes that the two agencies can have a better relationship with each other as a result of this ruling.

Board member Peterson announced that this is his last meeting, noting that he took Jack Foley's position on the Board when he died. He stated that he will be replaced at the next meeting. He stated that it was a pleasure to work with everyone on the Board. Mr. Harris added that it has been a privilege and honor to work with and collaborate with Mr. Peterson on several important projects that have been good for California. He added that Mr. Peterson has always

been a staunch supporter of the Colorado River Board of California and the staff and has always acknowledged and appreciated them. He stated that he will be missed.

#### 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.

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

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that SDCWA finished a relining project on SDCWA's first aqueduct as part of the maintenance program. He stated that the first aqueduct includes two pipelines that were constructed in the 1940s and in the 1950s it delivered the first Colorado River water that flowed into Riverside County. He added that a video entitled "To Quench a Thirst", which is on the SDCWA's website, discusses the development and history of the agency because of the Navy and World War II efforts. He stated the first aqueducts went into San Vicente Reservoir in 1947. He stated that maintenance on the aqueduct was coordinated with all the member agencies to minimize impacts to water delivery.

Vice Chairman Madaffer stated that SDCWA secured a \$3 million grant to increase water affordability for low-income county residents. He stated that the funds will be used to install about 7,300 high efficiency toilets and smart irrigation controllers, which will help resident control water costs while saving 6,000 AF in water annually.

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

Mr. Kwan reported on the development of several capital projects. He stated that the design of the Groundwater Replenishment Project is underway as a design-build contract. He stated that it is anticipated that the project will be at 70% design by the end of the year and that

there is a guarantee maximum price with the design builder. He stated that if this project goes forward there could be 17,000 AF per year of recharge of the San Fernando Groundwater Basin.

Mr. Kwan stated that LADWP also has two construction projects going on at the Hyperion Treatment Plant. He also stated that Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) Pilot Facility is also under construction, noting that the project should be completed by the middle of this year. He stated that data collection for this project is needed over the next couple of months as part of the regulatory process. Mr. Kwan reported that construction of the 1.5 MGD Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF) is underway at the Hyperion Treatment Plant and should be completed by the end of this year. He stated that the project will help provide water to the LAX Airport site and potentially offset potable water use at the Hyperion Treatment Plant.

Mr. Kwan reported on LADWP's conservation and stormwater capture efforts. He stated that over 79,000 AF of stormwater was captured this year and during the last week of February, during a storm, it is estimated that 23,000 AF was captured. He added that an equivalent to 25 billion gallons of water has been captured in total. He stated in 2018-2019 Water Year, LADWP captured a little less than 85,000 AF, and with the recent storm activity this record may be superseded.

Responding to a question from Chairman Hamby about how the water is physically captured, Mr. Kwan explained that the majority of the capture is incidental and happens naturally by infiltration underground. He stated that roughly 20% of stormwater capture is created through a partnership with the Los Angeles County Flood Control.

Mr. Kwan reported on the activities of the Water Conservation Response Unit. He stated that this unit patrols the city and conducts ordinance enforcement to prohibit wasteful practices. He noted that LADWP still receives water waste complaints.

Mr. Kwan stated that LADWP is interested in potentially recommending to the Mayor of Los Angeles, Ms. Karen Bass, to change LADWP's outdoor water use ordinance from the current two watering days per week to three watering days per week.

Mr. Kwan reported that LADWP launched a pilot program for a smart home water monitoring device called a "Flume". He stated that LADWP will offset the cost of this device to twenty-five dollars per customer. He explained that the device attaches to the customer's water meter, connects to Wi-Fi, and then downloads to an app that shows real-time water use. He stated that LADWP reached a milestone of receiving 10,000 rebate applications for the device.

### Imperial Irrigation District

Ms. Shields provided an update on the E Lateral Reservoir water conservation project. The 40-acre project has a 400 acre-feet/year conservation yield and provides additional operational flexibility for downstream growers to facilitate on-farm efficiency conservation measures. The project allows for temporary storage of water over night and releases water in the morning when demands increase. The project cost just under \$6 million.

### Palo Verde Irrigation District

Mr. Echard provided an update of a canal break experienced by the district on February 24<sup>th</sup>. The break was thirty feet wide by seven foot deep. It flooded fifty-one acres of farmland on two different landowner's properties, and it took six hours to repair.

Mr. Madaffer asked if the district has calculated how much water might be saved with canal lining. Mr. Echard responded that they have two different engineering firms looking at seepage in the district system. Mr. Echard stated that if the system was lined there would be less diversions from the river even though they get return flow credits.

Mr. Madaffer stated that California needs to get the word out to the rest of the basin about the conservation activities being undertaken. He stated that San Diego and Coachella Valley Water District implemented a project that saves 180,000 acre-feet per year. The project cost \$500 million with \$200 million from the state of California. It lined over 50 miles of canals.

### California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mr. Harris provided an update for the Department of Fish and Wildlife on the Palo Verde Eco Reserve Restoration and Water Efficiency Improvement Project. The project received a Wildlife Conservation Board award of \$1.8 million to the California Waterfowl Association for habitat enhancement at PVER. The project included leveling 500 acres upland and seasonal wetland habitat; replaced concrete ditches with underground pipes & valves; and engineered and developed 42 acres of mixed Honey Mesquite and Palo Verde corridors that allow for efficient irrigation.

### **BASIN STATES ACTIVITIES**

Mr. Harris displayed a photo of a signing ceremony for the Salton Sea during the Colorado River Water Users Association (CRUWA) conference, which shows several members of the

Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, Mr. Wade Crowfoot, the Natural Resources Secretary for the California, Mr. Tommy Beaudreau, Secretary of the Interior, Ms. Camille Touton, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, and Ms. Tanya Trujillo, the Assistant Secretary of Water and Science. He acknowledged that there was a tremendous amount of work that went into the summer of 2022 leading up to signing this agreement between the United States, California, and the agencies.

Mr. Harris reported since January, Reclamation received two competing state proposals, the Six-State Proposal and California Proposal, for the SEIS modeling framework. He stated that since the submission of the proposals, water supply conditions and forecasts have improved across the Colorado River Basin and the Upper Basin States are planning to curtail the last two months of the WY 2023 Drought Response Operations (DROA) releases from the upstream Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) units down to Lake Powell, terminating about 40,000 AF from the original planned 500,000 AF of water coming from Flaming Gorge. He stated that Commissioner Touton did approve this action and has notified Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) that releases from Flaming Gorge will be reduced. He added that the Upper Basin states would like to recover the DROA water released to Lake Powell by rebuilding storage in Flaming Gorge reservoir from the spring runoff. He stated that DROA recovery should be done in conjunction with recovery of the 480,000 AF held back in Lake Powell from the Lower Basin States.

Mr. Harris stated that the Lower Basin States agreed to reduce water releases out of Glen Canyon Dam in 2022, noting that the Lower Basin was scheduled to receive 7.48 MAF but 480,000 AF was held back in Lake Powell. He stated that the Lower Basin States would also like to recover this water and restore it to Lake Mead, noting that it may be possible due to the improved water supply conditions and projected runoff from Lake Powell. He stated that we need to consider the implications for balancing both Lake Powell and Lake Mead reservoirs. He stated that the current operating tier for Lake Powell is the Lower Elevation Balancing Tier and by the end of WY-2023, the storage and elevation of Lake Powell will rise and exceed Lake Mead's contents. He stated that the February 24-Month Study has a projected release of 7.77 MAF from Glen Canyon Dam, noting that it is likely this value will increase due to increased inflows into Lake Powell. He stated that the 480,000 AF that has been sitting in Lake Powell will not be considered part of balancing operations and if operational neutrality is dropped, it could be considered system water and would then be used in balancing. He added this is an important discussion that the Lower and Upper Basin States must have.

Mr. Harris stated that another important aspect of the DROA recovery that needs to be figured out is how to physically recover the DROA releases in WY-2023 and whether it can be

recovered from the system water account in Lake Powell or if it is part of the system supply. He stated that the only element of the DROA recovery that has been agreed upon is the termination of DROA releases in March and April, noting that the timing of the recovery of 480,000 AF and the total volume of balancing releases remains undetermined. He reported that on March 10<sup>th</sup>, the seven basin states have had an initial discussion on these topics and plan to meet again in late March at the seven states meeting in Phoenix, Arizona. He stated that the Lower Basin states would like to figure out the DROA and Upper Basin balancing issue before there is certainty about moving forward. Other topics that need to be considered are Glen Canyon Dam annual release, so that Lake Mead's operations can be set, as well as how much of the potential conservation will be created under category 1A or 1B and how it impacts projected demands. He added that Reclamation is still assuming that MWD will be recovering Intentionally Create Surplus (ICS), noting that he is unsure if the current 24-Month Study is accurately reflecting California's demands for the remainder of the water year. He stated that several of these issues may be addressed by the April Colorado River Board meeting.

Board member Fisher inquired about who would be contributing to Category 1A, if that amount is fixed and we know who will be contributing. He stated that Category 1B contributions would not be determined until WY-2024. Mr. Harris responded that Commissioner Touton indicated during her public comments at Arizona State University that Reclamation knows the values for 1A and 650,000 AF is anticipated in additional conservation for California and Arizona. He stated that he is not sure how much of that amount is attributed to Category 1A or 1B, but if you assume 35% 1A and then it is an adjustable price for 1B. He added that Reclamation wants to get agreements for this matter finalized soon.

Mr. Harris stated that the Commissioner also indicated that Reclamation wants to develop a Category 2 application process soon for more durable, permanent, large capital improvement-type projects in the urban and agricultural sector, stating that IID's proposed regulating reservoir is an example of a project that would meet this standard. He added that a regulating reservoir would be more efficient and provide growers more flexibility in managing discrete pots of water in IID. Mr. Harris stated that Reclamation is currently developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to receive and review applications for Category 2 by 2025. He stated that these projects will be supported by the IRA funds that Congressman Peters discussed earlier. He stated that these projects need to be launched during the remaining interim period before the next set of Guidelines. He added that the activities we take today will inform long-term planning.



## **GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES**

Mr. Harris reported that CA DWR announced forecasted delivery allocations of 35% for the State Water Project (SWP). Reclamation announced the forecasted delivery allocations for the Central Valley Project (CVP). He stated that 35% will go to Sacramento River contractors, 75% for municipal and industrial water service contractors north-of-Delta serviced by Folsom reservoir on the American River and south-of-Delta, 100% for Eastside water service contracts, 100% for Class 1 and 20% for Class 2 Friant water users and 100% for Level 2 Wildlife Refuges.

## **WASHINGTON, D.C UPDATES**

Mr. Harris reported that President Biden released his Fiscal Year 2024 (FY-2024) budget to Congress on March 9<sup>th</sup>. He stated that Congress will hold significant oversight hearings in both the Appropriations and Authorizing committees to closely examine various aspects of the budget. He stated that the Monthly report has more detail about various aspects of the budget.

Mr. Harris reported that the FY-2024 budget request for Reclamation is \$1.4 billion for Reclamation to prioritize climate resiliency and drought mitigation, underserved communities, and address aging infrastructure needs.

Mr. Harris reported that on February 27<sup>th</sup>, Congresswoman Napolitano and Congressman Calvert hosted a briefing for all California House members on the status of the Colorado River and ongoing negotiations in the Colorado River Basin. He noted that about twenty staffers, mostly from California offices, attended the event. He stated that Chairman Hamby met with Senator Kelly from Arizona. He stated that he and Chairman Hamby also met with senior staff at the Department of the Interior, Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Reclamation and communicated California's desire to continue to work collaboratively and effectively with our sister states, particularly in these challenging times.

Chairman Hamby added that he believed the visit to D.C. was extremely productive. He stated that inner agency coordination that was happening between the agencies that came to D.C. was very compelling. He added that during the meetings, there was a strong amount of support within our delegation, including speaker McCarthy's office as well for the California position. He stated that back in January, there were concerns about the Six-State letter that was circulating and whether it would impact potential legislation, adding that this concern is now largely dispelled. He remarked that he would like to conduct a Zoom session of the information presented during the briefing to a larger audience in the future to help educate and inform others of California's Colorado River Basin story. Mr. Harris stated that a briefing presentation from Ms.

Tina Shields has been made available to the member agency. He also thanked for the assistance of Ms. Sara Tucker, the Six Agency Committee's Washington, DC representative and Ms. Tara Billingsley, IID's Washington, D.C representative for setting up several meetings for them.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.