

MINUTES OF MEETING
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, June 11, 2025

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (CRB or Board) was held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, Chino Hills Government Center, City Council Chambers, 14000 City Center Drive, Chino Hills, CA 91709.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Gloria Cordero (MWD)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)

Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)
David Vigil (DFW Alternate Designee)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Michael Camacho (MWD Alternate)
Gina Dockstader (IID Alternate)
Castula Estrada (CVWD Alternate)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)
Jordan Joaquin (Public Member)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)

Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)
Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)
Peter Nelson (CVWD)
David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
Brad Robinson (PVID Alternate)
Frank Ruiz (Public Member)

Others Present:

Steve Abbott
Nick Bahr
Fernando Castro Alvarez
Dennis Davis
Tommy Drennan
JR Echard
Michael Hughes
Ned Hyduke
Eric Katz
Travis Moore
Yuanyuan Myint

Jessica Neuwerth
Shana Rapoport
Angela Rashid
Dylan Redor
David Rheinheimer
Shanti Rosset
Alexi Schnell
Tina Shields
Zach Stevens
Joseph Vanderhorst
Jerry Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hamby announced no presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:13 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. Hearing none, he moved on to the next item on the agenda.

REPORTS

Water Supply and Operations Report

Staff Member Rashid reported on the highlights from the Basin, State and Local water supply and operations memorandum provided to Board Members before the meeting. She stated that runoff into Lake Powell was 62% of average. She stated that total system storage was about 1.5 MAF less than it was this time last year, noting that total system storage has been declining over the past several months. Lastly, she stated that California's precipitation was average, and State Water Project (SWP) reservoir storage was 119% of the historical average, enabling an SWP allocation of 50% to contractors.

Colorado River Basin Programs Report

Colorado River Basin Programs

Staff Member Rapoport reported that a memo is included in the meeting packet providing a report on activities and updates pertaining to programs in the Colorado River Basin. Staff Member Rapoport provided an opportunity for Board members to ask questions.

Staff Member Rapoport reported on highlights from the memo.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum and Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council held meetings in the past month.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the Salinity Forum held a retreat before the meeting to discuss the future of the program. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that there were spirited debates during the retreat and there will be similar discussions in the future to try to resolve where the program is headed.

Chairman Hamby added that Mr. Bill Hasencamp was reelected chair of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the Salinity Control Fix Act that was passed in December with much support from Board agencies' and is having a positive effect on the future outlook of the program. The purpose of that act was to help reduce the debt from the Lower Basin Development Fund. It appears that by 2029 the program should achieve a positive balance.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) provided an update on the binational discussions that are starting to occur in conjunction with post-2026 process. California, along with the other seven basin states, received a letter requesting technical expertise and that California provide staff to start engaging in a United States salinity policy workgroup.

Executive Director Neuwerth confirmed that she, Aaron Mead, Bill Hasencamp, and Fernando Castro Alvarez will be serving on the workgroup.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Staff Member Rapoport reported that there has not been an Adaptive Management Work Group meeting or Technical Work Group meeting since the last Board meeting. However, the Planning and Implementation Team, which makes recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, has been working on a recommendation regarding a potential flow experiment for this year. The Leadership Team recommended conducting a Cool Mix flow experiment this summer and probably into the fall.

Staff Member Rapoport added that those experiments release colder water through the bypass tubes at the bottom of the dam. They are very expensive for hydropower because the water is not being released through the hydropower jet tubes. The experiment last summer appears to have been very successful. There were no observations of warm water nonnative fish breeding. Extensive monitoring was conducted. Staff Member Rapoport stated that if the experiments can continue until a longer-term option for controlling the population is in place, there is good potential that endangered species, including humpback chub, can be protected.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that Basin States unanimously recommended conducting cool mix flows this year. The experimental release from Glen Canyon Dam blends water from the bypass tubes, which doesn't generate power, with water released from the turbines. Power generation is sacrificed to release water from a lower point in the dam, which cools the temperature downstream, resulting in lost hydropower revenue.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the Western Area Power Administration voted against an experiment and has expressed strong opposition. The decision regarding whether or not to conduct an experiment is made by the Secretary of the Interior and has not yet been made. Executive Director Neuwerth added that there is concern this year with staff cuts to the National Park Service, the agency doing the on-the-ground fish removal, that if the flows aren't implemented it could be the year that this non-native fish problem gets away from us in the Grand Canyon.

Executive Director Neuwerth added that this year the cost of hydropower this year is relatively modest because the recommended experiment was scaled back. Executive Director Neuwerth estimated that last year the experiment cost \$15 million and was a more ambitious version of the type of flow. Staff Member Rapoport stated that the cost this year may be closer to \$5 million and that the hydrology this year is making things less expensive because the river is anticipated to be cooler. Staff Member Rapoport added that the river is anticipated to be much warmer next year. If an experiment can be run this year, it will help going into next year.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) is knee deep in evaluating how the program may need to be adjusted for post-2026 processes. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has assigned staff to work with the LCR MSCP on the aspects of the program pertaining to the California Endangered Species Act permit.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the LCR MSCP is currently evaluating whether species might need to be added to the program. California is not anticipating any changes to its needs for nonflow coverage for the permit; however, both Arizona and Nevada have identified some areas there where they are looking to make changes.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the LCR MSCP is also working on developing the purpose and need statement, which is the opening portion of the document which defines the scope of the environmental processes being considered.

Staff Member Rapoport reminded the Board that all of Colorado River Basin programs have experienced about twenty percent staffing reductions along with budget reductions. The federal agencies are still in the process of adjusting work plans in light of these reductions.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that U.S. stakeholders are meeting to discuss a scope of work for the Minute 330 Binational Salinity Work Group. The workgroup will be

technical, focusing on salinity trends and sources, potential projects or procedures to mitigate the effects of salinity, and improvements to data collection.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget for Reclamation recommended a reduction of about 12% from FY 2024 funding levels. The budget includes Reclamation staffing reductions of approximately 30%. Executive Director Neuwerth also noted that Kate MacGregor had been confirmed as Deputy Secretary of the Interior. A full Senate hearing had not yet been scheduled for Assistant Secretary of Water and Science nominee, Andrea Travnicek.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Consideration and Approval of Meeting Minutes of the March 11, 2025, Board Meeting

Chairman Hamby stated that the Board will skip this item due to lack of presence of a quorum.

Consideration and Approval of Meeting Minutes of the March 12, 2025, Board Meeting

Chairman Hamby stated that the Board will skip this item due to lack of presence of a quorum.

Consideration and Adoption of the Colorado River Board of California FY 2025-2026 Budget

Chairman Hamby stated that the Board will skip this item due to lack of presence of a quorum.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated the urgency for budget approval and asked Eric Katz, CRB's counsel, to provide guidance on the option for virtual board meeting.

Mr. Katz stated two options for virtual Board meetings. One option was to have majority of the Board Members in the same physical location, then a minority of Board Members could participate remotely without disclosing their location on the agenda. Another option was that all Board Members could participate remotely as long as each location of the board members was disclosed on the agenda and opened to the public. Chairman Hamby asked the preference from the Board Members.

Member Heidemann asked if the Board had to decide the option on the virtual meeting. Mr. Katz answered that the decision needed to be made ten days in advance of board meeting.

After discussion, the Board decided on a virtual meeting on June 25, 2025. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that time and details would be provided by email to Board Members.

Member Agency and Public Member Reports

Imperial Irrigation District (IID)

IID Water Manager Tina Shields reported that IID started its 2025 Deficit Irrigation Program on June 1st as part of its 2024-2026 System Conservation Implementation Agreement (SCIA) with Reclamation to help increase the elevation of Lake Mead. Ms. Shields noted that there was more interest in the program than their environmental permits allowed, so they used a lottery to implement the program at the required permit level. She noted that IID is anticipating a reduction of about 216,000 acre-feet at the field level, a little higher at the point of diversion, covering 150,000 acres.

Ms. Shields also stated that IID's water use forecast will drop, as it currently shows an overrun that does not account for the deficit program being implemented in a four-month period, noting that the deficit program was prorated over the full year for forecasting purposes.

Ms. Shields elaborated on the deficit program, noting that IID codes computer systems for water gates so that growers cannot order water for their systems during the program. She also described the contracting mechanism.

Finally, Ms. Shields also noted that fields will be eligible to roll back into IID's on-farm program at the end if they use more capital-intensive conservation measures such as sprinklers, drip irrigation, or tailwater return systems, otherwise they have to wait until January of next year.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)

Member Cordero reported that MWD released the draft Environmental Impact Report on May 14th for its Pure Water Southern California facility, noting that this will initiate a two-month public comment period. She noted that MWD will conduct extensive community outreach, including with public hearings and informal booths at community events. She reported that the environmental review is expected to be completed in 2026, after which MWD and the board of directors of the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts will consider final approval of the Pure Water program. She finally noted that, if approved, the program would be able to deliver water as early as 2033.

Member Cordero reported that MWD has joined a coalition of labor, business infrastructure, social justice, and nonprofit organizations to support Governor Gavin Newsom's proposal to eliminate hurdles in the planning and development of the Delta Conveyance Project, including administrative barriers and some uncertainties, noting that this could lead to lower costs, fewer delays, and better information for decision making.

Member Cordero reported that MWD and San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) have settled a fifteen-year legal dispute over rates and the price terms of the exchange agreement between the two agencies. She expressed excitement about this, noting that MWD is celebrating it and is planning celebratory activities. She noted that the two agencies announced the settlement at a news conference on June 2nd at SDCWA's headquarters in San Diego. She expressed appreciation and gratitude on behalf of MWD.

San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)

Member Heidemann followed up on Member Cordero's report and similarly reported on the recent announcement of the legal settlement between SDCWA and MWD, emphasizing the historic nature of the settlement and expressing similar gratitude and optimism for the future.

Member Heidemann reported on an award received by SDCWA member agency Vallecitos Water District, noting that it was honored last month with MWD's 2025 One Water Award for its work with homeowner's associations on turf replacement projects. He also described the award itself, noting that it honors businesses and nonresidential industries for achieving remarkable water savings with assistance from MWD's various water efficiency programs.

General Matters

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Basin States had recently pivoted to a new proposal after reaching an impasse on previous concepts. Under the proposals discussed for most of 2024, reductions would occur Basin-wide based on system storage. However, the Basins could not reach agreement on what constituted a reduction, who should take reductions, and when reductions would occur.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that in recent months, a new idea has been proposed which would require an annual release from Glen Canyon Dam based on the natural flow of the preceding three years. Both basins would then have latitude to operate as they saw fit to live with the required release. Natural flow is calculated by removing uses and losses from the inflow to Lake Powell. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that to live with the natural flow release, the Lower Basin would need to develop a shortage rule curve to manage and maintain the elevation of Lake Mead. The Upper Basin would be expected to act similarly, laying out actions to maintain the elevation of Lake Powell as desired while ensuring downstream releases.

Chairman Hamby noted that through this proposal, the Lower Basin would be compromising by accepting releases less than 8.23 MAF/yr. The deal would be premised upon the Upper Basin meeting the required release.

Executive Director Neuwerth noted that under the natural flow proposal, the Lower Basin would receive more water under wet hydrologic conditions and less water under dry hydrologic conditions. The proposal is therefore inherently responsive to hydrology, which is a stated priority for the Upper Basin.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Basin States and Reclamation are currently discussing how the proposal could be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Post-2026 Operations, while leaving sufficient room for continued negotiation among the Basin States. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that the current proposal is to model natural flow releases between 55-75% in the draft EIS. The Basin States would continue negotiating, with the goal of reaching final agreement in time for inclusion in a final EIS in mid-2026.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that there is a narrow path to success for a Basin States agreement. Although the new proposal has sidestepped some previous points of disagreement, the Upper Basin is resistant to any percentage that could require mandatory action on their part.

Chairman Hamby noted that it appears likely that the Upper Basin will fall below the required Compact release to the Lower Basin and Mexico in the next several years.

In response to a question from Member Heideman, Executive Director Neuwerth noted that the Powell release would be based on the previous three years of hydrology. This would smooth out any particularly bad or good years, while still remaining responsive to changing hydrologic conditions. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the current guidelines will set operations through September 2026, and a new record of decision would need to be in place before October 1, 2026. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that a draft EIS is expected by late 2025 or early 2026. The Basin States would need a final agreement in place by February 2026 for inclusion in the final EIS.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Lower Basin has been primarily focused on the progress of natural flow discussions, which will set the water budget for the Lower Basin and Mexico. However, the Lower Basin is also in the process of developing a shortage curve that will dictate Lower Basin shortages in response to releases from Lake Powell. The curve is similar to the “z-graph” shortage curve in the 2024 Lower Basin alternative. The Lower Basin still needs to resolve terms for reductions greater than 1.5 MAF and for a new water storage program post-2026.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Lower Basin also submitted comments to Reclamation on the alternatives in the January Alternatives Report, asking Reclamation to replace the Basin Hybrid alternative with the Natural Flow alternative and to include an alternative that

approximates Compact compliance. Chairman Hamby noted that the Lower Basin states had previously made several requests of Reclamation to include Compact compliance in the post-2026 alternatives, and the Lower Basin attempted to make the latest request as narrow and clear as possible.

Chairman Hamby noted that Scott Cameron had been appointed Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Water and Science and would likely have a role in the process even after the confirmation of Assistant Secretary nominee Andrea Travnicek. Chairman Hamby noted that no one had yet been nominated for Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner.

Chairman Hamby reported that the Lower Basin plan for 1.5 MAF/yr of reductions in the U.S. and Mexico is moving forward. The proposal includes 760 KAF from Arizona, 440 KAF from California, 50 KAF from Nevada, and 250 KAF from Mexico. Arizona had scheduled a meeting of the Arizona Reconsultation Committee to discuss Arizona's reductions, and California had also initiated discussions among its water users to discuss how to materialize 440 KAF of reductions on an annual basis. Discussions include environmental compliance considerations and potential required funding.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session was conducted.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Hamby announced that the next Board meeting is scheduled to be at 10:00 a.m. on August 20, at San Diego, CA.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.