

MINUTES OF MEETING  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, October 15, 2025

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (CRB or Board) was held on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Water Quality Conference Room 211, 700 Moreno Avenue, La Verne, CA 91750.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Gloria Cordero (MWD)	Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)
Gina Dockstader (IID Alternate)	Peter Nelson (CVWD)
Dana B. Fisher, Jr. (PVID)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)	Brad Robinson (PVID Alternate)
Jeanine Jones (DWR Designee)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)
Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)	David Vigil (CDFW Alternate Designee)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Michael Camacho (MWD Alternate)	Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)
Castula Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	Jordan Joaquin (Public Member)
Christopher Hayes (CDFW Designee)	

Others Present:

Sofia Almeida	Yuanyuan Myint
Nick Bahr	Jessica Neuwerth
Linda Bahr	Adan Ortega
Jordan Bunker	Angela Rashid
Parker Cohn	David Rheinheimer
Dennis Davis	Alex Rodriguez
JR Echard	Jason Rollo
Bill Hasencamp	Alexi Schnell
Eric Katz	Zach Stevens
Laura Lamdin	Deven Upadhyay
Joyce Lehman	Joseph Vanderhorst
Aaron Mead	Noah Wick
Travis Moore	Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hamby announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

## **WELCOME AND REMARKS FROM THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – Deven Upadhyay, General Manager**

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) General Manager Deven Upadhyay addressed the Board, beginning by emphasizing the need for coordinated leadership on the Colorado River. He highlighted MWD's diverse membership of agencies, each with varying needs and reliance on MWD for water, and noted that MWD was established as a collaborative agency.

Mr. Upadhyay discussed MWD's water supplies, pointing out that while groundwater is the largest source outside MWD's direct management, the agency manages a variety of sources including the State Water Project, and has achieved significant efficiency gains. He cited a reduction in per capita water use as its service area grew by five million people.

Mr. Upadhyay reviewed the historical evolution of MWD's system, showing slides that illustrated the build-out of the distribution system each decade since the 1940s, and highlighted major infrastructure such as the Jensen Water Treatment Plant, constructed in the 1970s. Upadhyay noted the high costs of maintaining the system, approximately \$950 million every few years, and contrasted this with the revenue growth experienced during system expansion. He emphasized that supply has diminished.

Looking ahead, Mr. Upadhyay emphasized the continuing importance of the Colorado River, urging ongoing collaboration through the CRB. He expressed concern over litigation affecting MWD and California, noting the potential risk to senior water rights. Upadhyay advocated for a seven-state post-2026 proposal requiring reductions by all users, and that MWD does not want to use the priority system to execute a compact call. He also mentioned that cross-state water transfers should remain an option. Finally, he also stated his support for Hamby in ongoing negotiations.

Chairman Hamby acknowledged the leadership by Mr. Upadhyay. Chairman Hamby then introduced MWD Board Chair Adan Ortega for additional remarks.

Mr. Ortega added reflections on Metropolitan's current focus, emphasizing the importance of finding a common purpose among MWD's diverse agencies and noting that the era of growth-driven expansion has passed. He suggested that risk management, including

deciding which risks to share collectively versus bear individually, should serve as a unifying principle for both MWD and broader regional water interests.

Drawing on lessons from the early 2000s, including the Quantification Settlement Agreement, Mr. Ortega highlighted the value of regional interdependence, noting that agencies rely on one another for water supply, financial stability, and operational efficiency, including exchanges between Colorado River and State Water Project supplies. He observed that past emphasis on independence has diminishing returns without growth, underscoring the need for collaboration.

Mr. Ortega expressed optimism about MWD's new leadership, noting the youth and energy of the agency's staff and leadership, and likening the current generation of managers to the founders of MWD in the 1920s. He concluded by recognizing CRB Chairman Hamby, Vice Chairman Madaffer, and member Gloria Cordero for their dedication to advancing MWD's mission in the coming year.

### **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.

Chairman Hamby read the written comments provided by Michael Cohen from Pacific Institute to the Board. Staff Member Myint read a comment provided by Parker Cohn from Performance Resource Management to the Board.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Hamby moved on to the next item.

### **REPORTS**

#### **Water Supply and Operations Report**

Staff Member Rashid reported that October 1, 2025, marked the start of Water Year 2026 (WY-2026). She reported that the preliminary observed unregulated inflow into Lake Powell was 4.69 MAF (49% of normal) for WY-2025, adding that Lake Powell lost 30 feet of elevation during WY-2025. She reported that California state precipitation in WY-2025 was 96% of average and end of September reservoir storage was 110% of historical average. She reported that the most probable projected inflow to Lake Powell for WY-2026 is 79% of average or 7.6 MAF.

#### **Colorado River Basin Programs Report**

### *Colorado River Basin Programs*

Executive Director Neuwerth reported on highlights from a memo included in the meeting packet providing a report on activities and updates pertaining to programs in the Colorado River Basin

#### *Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program*

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) Work Group held a meeting about a month ago. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the program continues to face impacts from reduced federal staffing within that program. The program was lightly staffed prior to the staffing reductions and then lost several of its key staffers who have not yet been replaced. One consequence is that Reclamation did not release a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) during 2025. Reclamation is anticipating issuing a NOFO in 2026.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that one of the items the Board is keeping a close watch on is the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU). PVU continues to operate. Previously, there was a significant earthquake in the Paradox Valley that we believe was caused by the operation of PVU. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that PVU is operating at about two thirds of its total capacity.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that there has not been any recent notable seismicity detected in the area and that the plan is to continue operating PVU at its current capacity until something happens with the seismicity in the region. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the Board is continuing to push for a more comprehensive solution to address salinity that is entering into the Colorado River in the Paradox Valley. Paradox Valley is one of the few areas on the river that's a point source where a lot of salinity is introduced in in a relatively small area. Executive Director Neuwerth added that there are scientific studies ongoing by USGS in the valley to evaluate if there are ways to intercept groundwater before it goes through the salt deposits and reaches the Dolores River.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that in two weeks California is hosting the fall meeting of the Forum. Executive Director Neuwerth reported stated that there will be a tour on the 27<sup>th</sup> followed by a meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> at Metropolitan's offices down in downtown Los Angeles. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the meeting is open to the public.

Chairman Hamby inquired as to the tour stops. Mr. Hasencamp stated that the stops would include Intuit Dome, Pure Water Southern California, conservation sites in Pasadena, and other activities still in development.

### *Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program*

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that there was a significant fire on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon over the summer. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that there is a great deal of ash there and that it is possible that if there's a significant rain event the ash will flow into a tributary, which can have biological and water quality effects. Executive Director Neuwerth added that the ash is near some of the tributaries that host populations of the humpback chub, a threatened fish in the Grand Canyon.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that one of the big actions that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCAMP) is currently working on is Cool Mix Flows. A second consecutive summer of Cool Mix Flows was conducted this past year. The goal is, rather than pulling water through the power generators of the dam, to instead release water through the bypass tubes which suck water from a lower point in the reservoir and therefore cool the water. The cooler water is thought to help prevent the spawning of small mouth bass which poses a significant threat to the native fish in the region. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that there is a significant cost to the experiments and it is not a long-term solution. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the lower the reservoir gets, the warmer the releases are through the hydropower tubes and that if we have a dry year, there could be a very strong push to conduct a third year of Cool Mix Flows.

Mr. Hasencamp asked whether there could be alignment between Upper Basin power interests who want to ensure that Lake Powell can generate hydropower at any elevation, and Lower Basin water interests who want to ensure that infrastructure concerns at Lake Powell don't affect releases. Executive Director Neuwerth agreed, stating that Lake Powell fixes like adding power generation to bypass tubes could also meet an environmental need, by allowing for cold-water releases without sacrificing power generation.

### *Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program*

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) is moving forward in preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to update the environmental compliance for on-river changes and flow. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the group is working on an EIS process that is expected to conclude somewhere in the late 2020s.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that California's permittees have recently executed a co-lead agency agreement between the Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, and the Metropolitan Water District for the EIR. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the effort is moving forward but is to some extent being hamstrung by the uncertainty facing post-2026 operations.

## Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported Reclamation recently notified stakeholders that Section 6(E) of the 2024 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) had been triggered. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the September 24-Month Study minimum probable projection showed that Lake Powell could fall below elevation 3,500', starting a consultation process to potentially decrease the release from Lake Powell to as low as 6.0 MAF as needed to protect elevation 3,500'.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the WY-2026 release is 7.48 MAF and four of the past five years has been 7.48 MAF or less. The Section 6(E) process could further reduce the WY-2026 release. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that this early in the water year, the potential for a downward adjustment is still speculative, and Reclamation affirmed that they would consider all other actions to prevent Lake Powell from declining below 3,500' before reducing the release.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that one action to be considered before reducing the release is Drought Response Operations Agreement (DROA) tools, which include changing the monthly release pattern and drawing down storage of reservoirs above Lake Powell. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that the DROA process had been triggered in July 2025, when the 24-Month Study most probable projection showed Lake Powell declining below elevation 3,525'. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that her priority it to ensure that upstream actions are exhausted before downstream releases are reduced.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the D.C. Report was included in Executive Director's Report Memo. The government shutdown continued but that Reclamation staffers key to the Colorado River had not been furloughed. Executive Director Neuwerth also reported that Andrea Tranicek was confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science on September 18<sup>th</sup> and had begun attending Basin States meeting.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### Consideration and Approval of Meeting Minutes of the August 20, 2025 Board Meeting

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the May 14, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Madaffer moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Nelson. By roll-call vote, this item was unanimously approved. Member Vigil abstained.

### Draft 2026 Colorado River Board meeting schedule

Chairman Hamby suggested to schedule monthly board meeting in calendar year 2026 and asked for Board's input on the meeting locations.

After discussion, the Board has reached consensus on having monthly Board meetings at Palm Desert, Ontario, and their adjacent.

### Member Agency and Public Member Reports

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

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported about the San Vicente pumped storage facility, noting that SDCWA is in the middle of planning this hydroelectric facility. He reported that its capacity will be 500 MW, that in September the SDCWA board approved a contract to continue with the project, that is a joint venture with the City of San Diego, and that the project is in the feasibility evaluation phase. He emphasized that the facility is clean energy storage, with water, not lithium batteries. He noted that SDCWA received \$18 million from the State of California to support the feasibility studies. He provided further details of the project, noting the energy context with increased solar power, and stated that it would serve about 135,000 households. He also stated that the San Vicente reservoir would continue to serve its primary mission of delivering water to the SDCWA region, but that it would also provide needed energy storage.

Executive Director Neuwerth inquired about the time frame to build the facility. Vice Chairman Madaffer state that, with probable litigation from people who don't like the new forebay, the project could take five to ten years to build.

#### *Imperial Irrigation District (IID)*

Member Dockstader reported that IID provided a tour last month (September), for Reclamation, including Department of Interior's Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Scott Cameron and Acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation David Palumbo. She outlined the tour itinerary and highlights and noted that many local stakeholders and government representatives joined the tour for dinner.

#### *California Department of Water Resources (DWR)*

Member Jones reported that DWR found the first golden mussels in the Western Hemisphere, in their Southern California Reservoirs. She explained that the mussels come from ballast water from China, similar to zebra and quagga mussels, and that they clog infrastructure and harm local ecosystems that support native fish species DWR is tasked with protecting. She indicated that the Board would likely hear more about this in the future.

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

Member Cordero also reported on golden mussels, but only briefly noting that Member Jones already did so. She reported that MWD recently inspected Diamon Valley for the mussels.

Member Cordero reported that MWD released updated supply and demand projections for the first project assessments under the Climate Adaptation Master Plan (CAMP) for water. She explained that these assessments are an important part of the CAMP for water process by providing a standardized evaluation of projects according to six criteria, including reliability, affordability, and environmental co-benefits. She reported that MWD staff presented the MWD board with preliminary assessments for Pure Water Southern California and Sites Reservoir as of September 30<sup>th</sup>. She reported that Pure Water was ranked moderate to significant by reliability, resilience, adaptability, and equity evaluative criteria, but ranked very high in cost. She reported that Sites Reservoir was ranked moderate to significant by the reliability, resiliency, adaptability, and equity equivalent criteria and was ranked low in cost. She noted that environmental co-benefits were ranked limited to moderate for both projects. Member Cordero reminded the Board that the MWD board is considering building Pure Water in stages to balance the risk and lower the upfront costs.

Member Cordero reported on a tour that she and the MWD Board of Directors took to the Dixie Fire area in the Feather River, noting that the fire impacted 963,000 acres. She noted that MWD is considering a forest restoration project in the area in collaboration with local Indian tribe members, and in partnership with an organization called Blue Forest. Member Cordero observed that work in Northern California relates to what MWD Chair Upadhyay mentioned about collaboration and interdependency.

### **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chairman Hamby reserved reports for the Executive Session.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Hamby moved a motion to enter Executive Session, seconded by Member Pettijohn. By roll-call vote, this item was unanimously approved.

The Board entered Executive Session at 11:10 a.m.

Pursuant to Section 12519, of Water Code, an Executive Session was held to discuss interstate claims to the use of Colorado River system waters in judicial proceedings, administrative proceedings, and/or negotiations with representatives from the other Basin states or federal government.

### **REGULAR SESSION**

The Board resumed the regular session at 12:32 p.m. No action was taken during the Executive Session.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chairman Hamby stated no future agenda items.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 12:32 p.m.