

MINUTES OF MEETING  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Tuesday, December 16, 2025

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (CRB or Board) was held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, Milano V-VIII Room at Caesars Palace, 3570 Las Vegas Blvd South., Las Vegas, NV 89109.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

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

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Michael Camacho (MWD Alternate)	Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)
Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate Designee)
Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)	

Others Present:

Steve Abbott	Anthony Bianco
Dick Ackerman	Jaymie Bradford
Linda Ackerman	David Bradshaw
Kevin L. Alexander	Vikki Dee Bradshaw
Samantha Arthur	Alex Cardenas
Jamie Asbury	Sean Carlson
Heather Baez	Fernando Castro
Nick Bahr	Grant Chaffin
Jeff Baker	Robert Cheng
Clint Baze	Danielle Coats
Tommy Beaudreau	Andy Colosimo
Bidtah N. Becker	Wade Crowfoot
Stephen Benson	Tim Cox
	Ken Curtis

Alex Davis  
Harvey De La Torre  
Manny Delgado  
Dan Denham  
JR Echard  
David Edwards  
George Etchart  
Ray Face  
Brittany Foust  
Justina Gamboa-Arce  
Diego Gil  
Elizabeth Gonzalez  
Kim Gortz  
Melissa Baum Haley  
Alex Heide  
Frank Hilliker  
Jessica Humes  
Steve Kasower  
Eric Katz  
Sandra D. Kennedy  
Jeff Kightlinger  
Amanda Lacey  
Colby Lawton  
Ron Leimgraber  
Andrew Madrigal  
Cletis Mark  
Jason Martin  
Héctor Martínez  
Neal Meyers  
Marty Miller  
Dylan Mohamed  
Vanessa Munoz  
Yuanyuan Myint  
Gil Patrick O'Doud  
Adan Ortega  
Lewis Pacheco  
Michael Pacheco  
Joshua Partlow  
Maria Pastore  
Amy Peterson

Cole Pihl  
Darla Pikyavit  
Annalise Porter  
John Powell  
Meggan Quarles  
Tracey Quillen  
Sergio Quiroz  
Joshua Randall  
Shana Rapoport  
Angela Rashid  
David Rheinheimer  
Marc Robert  
Alex Rodríguez  
Eric Ruckdaschel  
Patrick Sanchez  
Eric Saperstein  
Joel Scalzitti  
J.P. Semper  
Nick Serrano  
Carolyn Schaffe  
Jack Schmidt  
Tina Shields  
Vickie Simmons  
Virgil Smith  
Andrea Travnicek  
Sara Tucker  
Cherie Watte  
Shawn Weddle  
Jay Weiner  
Meena Westford  
Zion White  
Renee Willette  
Landan Wilson  
Leticia Vasquez Wilson  
Frank Venegas  
Ross B. Wilson  
Bob Woodman  
Ditas Yamane  
Jerry Zimmerman  
Jo Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Hamby invited members of the audience to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board. Hearing none, Chairman Hamby moved on to the next item on the agenda.

## **RECOGNITION OF FEDERAL OFFICIALS**

Chairman Hamby opened the meeting and introduced Assistant Secretary Andrea Travnicsek of Water and Science for the Department of the Interior. Assistant Secretary Travnicsek reported that she is new to her role and was sworn in in November 2025. She stated that she attended Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA) conference in 2017 as the acting Assistant Secretary and then spent the last four years as the director of the North Dakota Department of Water Resources. She reported that her work allowed her to understand the different perspectives of the State, tribes, farmers, ranchers and industry.

Assistant Secretary Travnicsek stated that she appreciates the work that the Upper and Lower Basin states are engaged in to meet the deadline of February 14<sup>th</sup> to reach a seven-state consensus agreement.

Chairman Hamby thanked Assistant Secretary Travnicsek and introduced the California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. Secretary Wade Crowfoot thanked Assistant Secretary Travnicsek and Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Cameron for their leadership over the past months and couple of years. He stated that the best solution for the Seven States will be to find consensus. He stated that there is support for a consensus deal within the California Natural Resources Agency as well as the California Department of Water Resources. He explained that he works closely with Chairman Hamby and Executive Director Neuwerth. He reported that he has been keeping Governor Newsom informed of the progress of the negotiations.

Secretary Crowfoot thanked the Colorado River Board members for their commitment and the commitment of their agencies to continue to drive forward solutions for the past several years such as the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), which is over twenty years old and is the largest agriculture-to-urban transfer comprising of 800,000 acre-feet. He noted that part of his work addresses some of the impacts of the QSA such as the Salton Sea. He added that he is gratified that over the last few years the Lower Basin has come up with interim solutions to

stabilize Lake Mead's elevation, and particularly proud of California water agencies that stepped up outside of any grant agreement.

Secretary Crowfoot added that Colorado water use in California has been the lowest in 75 years, since 1949, noting that it is a result of driving consensus solutions forward. He stated that obtaining a seven-state solution by February 14<sup>th</sup> will be critical, adding that a Post-2026 operating agreement needs to be in place by August 2026. He stated we all recognize that we are Californians, but more importantly, we are Americans and we need a solution that will work for everyone, adding that it is an American crisis that requires an American solution. He commented that he is appreciative of everyone's work and confident that a consensus solution will be found.

## **REPORTS**

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

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that precipitation conditions for the first few months of Water Year 2026 are a mixed bag, during a time which is usually the wettest time of year. She stated that conditions were wet in October but precipitation fell as rain rather than snow. She stated that conditions in November were wet in the Lower Basin due to rain and the Upper Basin experienced dry conditions. She stated that conditions for mid-December are normal for precipitation but below normal for snowpack throughout the Basin. She added that there are few more months in the season to help make up the deficit.

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

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the Colorado River Basin Programs Report was included in the Board packet.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the Executive Director's Report was included in the Board packet. Executive Director Neuwerth introduced Ms. Sara Tucker from Natural Resource Results, the lobbyist for the Six Agency Committee, and encouraged members of the Board to talk with her after the meeting.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### **Draft 2026 Colorado River Board Meeting Schedule**

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the 2026 Colorado River Board meeting schedule. Vice Chairman Madaffer moved to approve the meeting schedule, seconded by Member Fisher. By roll-vote, this item was unanimously approved.

## Member Agency and Public Member Reports

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

Member Jones reported that California has been without a major drought, flood or heatwave emergency for the past two years, noting that this is unusual over the last ten years.

Member Jones reported on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), noting that 2025 was an important milestone for DWR because they completed all the initial interventions for all the groundwater basins and submitted all their required groundwater sustainability plans. She acknowledged the difficulty achieving this over 10 years and acknowledged the efforts of local water agencies. She also reported that DWR has just issued the public review draft of their report to all 515 groundwater basins in the state and that they will be completing the final report next year.

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

Member Cordero reported that 2025 has been a monumental year for MWD and that MWD continues to advance in water efficiency and conservation efforts. She reported that MWD is advancing both projects and programs that will grow its local water supply, noting that this to help reduce its dependence on Colorado River water. She emphasized that MWD's achievements in 2025 demonstrate its commitment to reducing water use, climate adaptation based on its CAMP for Water program, and working on a collaborative effort towards its long-term solutions in Southern California. Member Cordero then showed a video highlighting some of MWD's achievements in 2025. She concluded by noting that Colorado River stakeholders face difficult decisions in the upcoming year but expressed optimism about the future for water sustainability and security through collaboration.

### *Coachella Valley Water Authority (CVWD)*

Member Nelson reported on various conservation activities and other updates for 2025. He reported on short-term and long-term conservation activities. For short-term activities, he reported that under their replenishment facilities curtailment, CVWD has conserved 9,000 acre-feet as part of the 500+ Plan from 2022 and that from 2023 to 2026 they have 35,000 acre-feet/year under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Bucket 1 that they are not using to replenish their groundwater basin, resulting in up to a total of 140,000 acre-feet of conserved water. Also, for short-term activities, he reported on CVWD's Colorado River Agriculture Fallowing program under IRA Bucket 1, noting that a total of 30,000 acre-feet is expected to be conserved through 2026. He noted that these have both contributed to the 118,000 acre-feet CVWD has contributed to Lake Mead since 2023.

For longer-term actions, Member Nelson reported on its Water Reclamation Plant Upgrade Project with IRA Bucket 2 funding, noting that \$39 million was awarded for the project with an agreement to save 1,120 acre-feet per year over 30 years.

Member Nelson also reported on its Oasis In-lieu recharge progress, noting that Oasis is a \$52 million project to use Colorado River water directly instead of using it to recharge groundwater. He noted that it would improve water use efficiency. He reported that CVWD has received 4,100 acre-feet of water deliveries through this project in 2024 and estimates 12,000 acre-feet in both 2025 and 2026. He also noted that CVWD anticipates up to 32,000 acre-feet/year of Colorado River water will be delivered under this project upon full buildout in the future.

Member Nelson then reported on other updates. He reported that CVWD has been working with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the Desert Water Agency to settle groundwater basin claims from Agua Caliente. He reported that the parties have completed the agreement, noting that it is a great achievement. He noted that legislation has been introduced to Congress to ratify the agreement.

Member Nelson reported that CVWD has been working on transmission projects to serve their East Valley constituents who have arsenic in their groundwater. He reported that CVWD has connected three mobile home parks through this effort and has 35 on tap to connect.

Member Nelson reported that CVWD has been working on its nonportable water pipeline to move treated water to landscaping and tourism industries, reducing dependence on Colorado River water. He noted that they have more nonportable, recycled water customers online.

Member Nelson finally reported that CVWD is continuing work on its chromium 6 compliance program, noting that they have identified \$550 million of projects to come into compliance with the State's downward revision of its chromium 6 standards from 100 parts per billion down to 10 parts per billion.

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

Member Pettijohn presented a graphic showing snow water equivalent (SWE) for several years in the Eastern Sierra, indicating SWE is 60% of normal to date but that it is still early in the season. He pointed out that 2022-23 was the wettest year on record for the Los Angeles Aqueduct and that 2024-25 was the driest year on record. He emphasized that with climate change the region will have wetter wets and drier dries, that LADWP has been experiencing that, and that this is motivation for some of LADWP's activities in Los Angeles.

Member Pettijohn reported that LADWP is currently constructing one of the largest recycled water projects in the country, the Groundwater Replenishment Project. He described the project, noting that it will take water from LADWP's Donald C. Tillman water reclamation plant in the San Fernando Valley through a 54-inch pipeline to LADWP's Hansen Spreading Grounds. He stated that the project will cost \$930 million and will produce 45 million gallons per day (MGD) to serve about half a million customers per year. He noted that it will be online in 2027 and that progress is good.

Member Pettijohn reported on LADWP's conservation program, noting that it started in the 1980's and that they have continued to make progress on it. He noted that LADWP's per capita water use has decreased by thirty percent in the last fifteen years and is now at 68 gallons per capita per day (GPD). He reported that Los Angeles has been under mandatory conservation for 30 years now and that 56 million square feet of turf have been removed in the city. He compared that to the governor's call for 50 million to be removed statewide. Member Pettijohn also noted that 4.4 million high-efficiency toilets and other indoor devices have been installed in residential homes and commercial properties in the City. He mentioned that while the City has grown from 3 million people in 1970 to 4 million people today, total water use has decreased.

Lastly, Member Pettijohn reported on LADWP's Landscape Efficiency Assistance Program, noting that the program targets disadvantaged communities.

*Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID)*

PVID General Manager JR Echard, representing PVID, reported PVID's participation in the conservation implementation agreement with MWD and Reclamation under the IRA Bucket 1 funding. He reported that PVID has saved over 117,000 acre-feet of water over the first two years and plans to do the same in 2026, for a total of 351,000 acre-feet contributed to Lake Mead under the agreement. He also reported that they have just signed a new agreement with MWD and Reclamation to amend the program with an additional 36,000 acre-feet conserved in the last five months of 2026, for a total of 387,000 acre-feet conserved.

Mr. Echard also reported on another part of that conservation program, whereby local landowners voluntarily contribute fifteen dollars per acre-foot of the funding, matched by MWD to create a collaborative program totaling \$8 million to support the PVID community.

*San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)*

Vice Chairman Madaffer began by recognizing SDCWA staff present.

Vice Chairman Madaffer then stated that SDCWA joins with its other California partners in its message that "resiliency demands innovation, cooperation, and frankly, every basin-state

commitment to conservation.” He acknowledged Secretary Crowfoot mentioning the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), reiterating that it serves as an example from California of what other states can do for conservation. He emphasized that conservation under the QSA positions the SDCWA to be part of the solution on Colorado River sustainability and security.

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported on their settlement with MWD that ended 15 years of litigation between the agencies, expressing pride. He noted that the settlement includes an updated exchange agreement with MWD that provides greater budget certainty for both agencies and that it will allow SDCWA to exchange up to 50,000 acre-feet of its available supplies to help others. He also noted that SDCWA is launching a new partnership with Reclamation to explore a pilot interstate water transfer, including with agencies in Arizona.

Vice Chairman Madaffer then explained that in 2026 SDCWA will continue building on those accomplishments, including with exchanging its desalination water supplies to areas willing to also invest in new supplies. He elaborated by describing the value of using SDCWA’s Carlsbad Desalination Plant for piloting the interstate exchange transfers both within and outside of California, noting that the plant produces up to 56,000 acre-feet/year. He also noted that he heard from others yesterday how advanced California is in conservation compared to the other six states in terms of scale.

Vice Chairman Madaffer reported that, because of SDCWA’s partnership with IID and MWD, SDCWA left a total of 100,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead in 2023 and 2024. He emphasized that this was possible in part from the San Diego region’s growing portfolio of local water recycling projects, which produce about 17,000 acre-feet/year from those now online, with more coming soon. He listed several of these projects, including the Sweetwater Brackish Groundwater Recovery Facility, Pure Water Oceanside, and the Escondido Membrane Filtration Reverse Osmosis Facility. He emphasized that these are all part of a broader local supply development effort.

Vice Chairman Madaffer closed by noting that the San Diego region has provided a track record of partnership, innovation, and meaningful contributions to basin stability, and that it is ready to support California’s leadership in post-2026 Colorado River management.

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

IID Water Manager Tina Shields, representing IID, provided a high-level overview of the IID system, noting the area’s \$3 billion agricultural economy that depends entirely on the Colorado River for water. She highlighted the priority to keep IID’s irrigation system gravity fed and emphasized the size of the system and the efforts needed to maintain it.

Ms. Shields reported on activities in partnership with the State of California and the Salton Sea Management Program. She highlighted that in May 2025 gates were opened on new Salton Sea restoration facilities under the Salton Sea Species Conservation and Habitat Project, filling up wetlands. She reported that IID worked with Reclamation to use some of the \$250 million in IRA funding that was directed to the State of California for Salton Sea restoration, a precondition for 2023-2026 System Conservation Implementation Agreements. She noted that 8,000 acres are currently operational and that the project will expand up to 8,000 acres.

Ms. Shields reported that IID hosted a visit from new Department of Interior representatives in August, including the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science and Acting Commissioner of Reclamation. She noted that they toured the area and met growers and local industries that depend on IID for water.

Ms. Shields reported that IID is continuing to implement its Groundwater Sustainability Area (GSA) water transfer programs, noting that they normally do about half a million acre-feet of conservation but that starting in 2023 they were able to increase conservation with federal partnerships. She reported that IID implemented the first desert irrigation program in the district, targeting alfalfa decline and bermudagrass, shutting off water to growers that volunteered for the program in exchange for compensation. She noted that the program grew from a 43-day program last year and a 45 to 60 day program this year.

Ms. Shields noted that conservation is typically about 16 percent of IID's Colorado River entitlement, but that this year that is almost 23 percent. She indicated that total conservation would be more than 720,000 acre-feet in 2025, noting that one third of this is from system improvements. She explained that another third, about 200,000 acre-feet/year, is from a field-level program with the assistance of funding and partnership with SDCWA. She elaborated further on the program, noting some current restrictions. Ms. Shields highlighted the broad participation from growers, noting that they understand the challenge of depending on the Colorado River as a sole source of water and recognize the need to maintain its long-term productivity. Ms. Shields also highlighted that cumulative conservation since 2003, with the execution of the QSA agreements, has now exceeded 9 million acre-feet.

Ms. Shields closed by discussing the burrowing owl, noting that, while cute, they are challenging as they are being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). She reported that IID commissioned a survey across both Imperial and Coachella Valleys, which showed that the owls are not endangered in the Imperial Valley. She reported that the survey found 7,000 pairs of breeding owls in the Imperial Valley, a significant portion of the entire population. She reported that they also found that the owl population has rebounded in the Coachella Valley from 20 to 30 years ago, from only a couple of pairs identified to over 300 breeding pairs. Ms. Shields reported that IID submitted this information to the California Natural

Resources Agency to try to exclude IID's service area from any potential ESA listing of the owls. She highlighted that they like irrigation and farming, as they like to burrow behind concrete-lined canals.

### **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chairman Hamby reported that the Basin States missed a November 11<sup>th</sup> deadline to reach agreement on Colorado River Basin operations post-2026, and the states now have until February 14<sup>th</sup> to reach agreement. Chairman Hamby stated that there the river is smaller, requiring less water use. Chairman Hamby stated that the California agencies had expended a tremendous amount of time and money in recent decades to collaborate, implement programs, and reduce California's water use. The effect of these programs has made a massive difference on the river, with California's water use now lower than it's been since 1949. Despite these programs, California's agriculture, fed by Colorado River water, is more productive than ever, and California's population and economy continues to grow.

### **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 10:50 a.m.