

# STATE OF COLORADO

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## Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Ted Kowalski, Chief, Interstate and Federal Section

DATE: September 2, 2010

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 17: September 13-15, 2010 Board Meeting**  
Interstate & Federal Section – Colorado River Basin Study

Bill Ritter, Jr.  
Governor

Mike King  
DNR Executive Director

Jennifer L. Gimbel  
CWCB Director

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### Background

At the January Board meeting earlier this year I described the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation ("Bureau") and Colorado River Basin states' basin study ("Study") that was selected for funding under the Bureau's "Basin Study Program." The funding for this study will be split 50/50; \$1 million will be provided by the Bureau of Reclamation and \$1 million will be provided by the seven Colorado River Basin states (who will each provide \$142,860 in cash and in kind services). This Study will include: an assessment of current and future water supplies; an assessment of current and future water demands; a development of reliability metrics for evaluating the system performance of the Colorado River; and, the development and evaluation of options and strategies to resolve supply-demand water imbalances and mitigate risks associated with such imbalances. Since January, the Bureau and the Basin states have hired CH2MHill and Black and Veatch as the contracting team. We have established subgroups associated with the water supply, water demand and system reliability tasks, and we have begun the work associated with each of these tasks.

This intent of this Study has been described as trying to answer two fundamental questions:

1) What is the future reliability of the Colorado River system to meet the needs of Basin Resources? and, 2) What are the options and strategies to mitigate future risks to these resources? Regarding these two fundamental questions, we have decided as a group to use a scenario approach. This approach has been used in other water planning processes, such as the Inter-Basin Compact Commission ("IBCC") planning process. In this context, the states and the Bureau used a basic survey to acquire general information about the importance and uncertainty associated with certain key driving forces related to water resource planning. This work will be used to develop different water supply and demand scenarios and may assist us in assessing future risks and evaluating adaptation strategies.

### Staff Recommendation

The Staff will provide a presentation on the Study and seek the Board's input.