

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

FROM: Ted Kowalski, Chief, Interstate, Federal and Water
Information Section

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

DATE: March 8, 2011

Jennifer L. Gimbel
CWCB Director

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 8, March 20-21, 2011 Board Meeting**
Interstate & Federal Section – Colorado River Basin Study Update

Background

At the November, 2011 Board meeting, the Board received an update on the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (“Bureau”) and Colorado River Basin states’ (“Basin States”) basin study (“Study”), which was selected for funding under the Bureau’s “Basin Study Program.” Since then, the Bureau and the Basin States have issued a number of updated technical memoranda to supplement the Interim Report No. 1, which was issued in June 2011. As background for the newer Board members, Interim Report No. 1 included: 1) four quantified water supply scenarios; 2) a description of six different water demand scenarios; and, 3) a description of some of the metrics that will be examined. The more recent work has included: quantification of future water demands; refinement of the metrics against which water supply/demand scenarios will be compared; and an evaluation of different options and strategies that could be employed to reduce future water supply/demand imbalances. The intent of this Study continues to try to get at 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?

The Bureau and the Basin States continue to make significant progress. There have been a number of updates to the demand quantifications and the metrics, and the options and strategies have been made public. Thus, this is a critical time for the Board to provide input and guidance. Some of the more details of the recent work will be presented to the Board, and the Staff will seek the Board’s direction.

Staff Recommendation

The Staff will provide a presentation on the Study and seek the Board’s input on the current work related to the Study.