

# **Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) Meeting Highlights**

**April 29, 2014 - Loveland, CO**

## **Revisions to the IBCC Draft Conceptual Agreement**

IBCC task groups met after the March IBCC meeting to review a draft discussion document expanding on the eight conceptual agreement points the group identified regarding a new transmountain diversion at the March meeting. The IBCC reviewed and favorably regarded the task group revisions to the draft conceptual agreement, but determined that the final point “a package of projects meeting points 1-7” was duplicative. The IBCC and task group updated the seven points as follows:

1. The East Slope is not looking for firm yield from a transmountain diversion project and would accept West Slope hydrologic risk for that project. Future West Slope needs will need to be accommodated as part of a new transmountain diversion project.
2. A transmountain project would be used conjunctively with ATMs, Denver Basin Aquifer resources, carry-over storage, terminal storage, drought restriction savings, and other non-West Slope water sources.
3. In order to manage when a transmountain diversion will be able to divert, triggers are needed.
4. An insurance policy is needed for existing uses, “agreed-to” projects\*, and some reasonable increment of future West Slope development.
5. Clarification is needed for how West Slope needs will be accommodated.
6. Colorado will continue its commitment to improve conservation and reuse.
7. Environmental resiliency and recreational needs must be addressed both before and conjunctively with a new transmountain diversion.

## **Contingency Planning Presentation**

Eric Kuhn, Jim Lochhead, and John McClow provided an update on the activities of the Upper Basin States contingency planning process, touching on the following points:

- After US Bureau of Reclamation projections indicated that dry hydrologies could continue in the Colorado River Basin, concerns were raised about storage levels at Lakes Powell and Mead falling below critical levels. To prepare for this high-consequence possibility, the seven Colorado Basin States convened a group to come up with a contingency plan.
- The Upper Basin States came up with the following options as part of their contingency plan: 1) augmentation (e.g., cloud seeding, phreatophyte control), 2) re-operation of Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) reservoirs, and 3) demand management strategies.
- So far, modeling performed by the technical working group indicates that expanded operations of CRSP reservoirs will be effective in reducing the likelihood of Lake Powell dropping below minimum power pool. Demand management can reduce that risk further.
- Demand management is needed in both the Lower and Upper Basin States. For the Upper Basin all reductions in water use will be voluntary and compensated.
- Keeping Lake Powell above minimum power pool is viewed an effective surrogate for avoiding curtailment under the Colorado River Compact, which is part of the reason why the insurance policy identified in item four above is identified as contingency planning.

## Action Items

In addition, the IBCC identified several action items to engage the roundtable and further understanding of each of the points. These are bulleted below.

- Develop a 2-page memo outlining options available for triggers and/or interim triggers for a new TMD (staff)
- Engage basin roundtable members in understanding contingency planning and the role it plays in the initial draft of the conceptual agreement (IBCC members and staff)
- Explore conducting a new study or review of previous studies on Colorado Decision Support System (CDSS) estimates for natural flow, depletions, and pre-Compact depletions for each river in the Colorado Basin (staff)
- Engage basin roundtable members in understanding and discussing the conceptual agreement drafted by the IBCC and share the draft document with the basin roundtables (IBCC members)
- Clarify in the document which aspects can be considered risk management tools (staff)

## Future Task Group Conversations

The IBCC also indicated that there were several issues that need additional discussion and deliberation by the IBCC. Topics identified for additional IBCC work include:

- Additional discussion about East Slope how drought reserves and drought restrictions can or cannot be used to support a new transmountain diversion
- Discussion on the framework for what constitutes “agreed to projects” and additional West Slope needs
- Exploration of the mutual benefits and advantages for Colorado’s shared future associated with risk management
- Discussion of more detailed strategies for enhanced municipal conservation (*Note: The Conservation Subcommittee has agreed to discuss this in May.*)
- Additional discussion of the intersection of reuse and conservation
- Discussion of near-term funding strategies to enhance environmental resiliency
- Exploration of how to keep a new transmountain diversion on an equitable basis with agricultural transfers as an option for new water supplies

## “Placeholder” Items

The IBCC also recommended that the topics described below be given a placeholder in the current draft conceptual agreement and be discussed after draft Basin Implementation Plans are submitted:

- Whether the conceptual agreement the IBCC is forming should explicitly address equitable apportionment between the West Slope or deal with this issue more generally (*Note: “Equitable apportionment” language potentially to be changed to “future use allocation.”*)
- How a TMD project could or should be structured, specifically looking at partnership structures, participants, financing, operational rules, proof of need, and project feasibility
- What, if any, steps should be taken now to preserve the option for a new TMD in the future

## Potential Restructure Draft Conceptual Agreement

Additionally, the group discussed restructuring the seven components of the draft conceptual agreement into fewer categories, as long as no content was lost.