



COLORADO
Colorado Water
Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Joe Busto, Staff
Watershed and Flood Protection Section
Brent Newman, Section Chief
Interstate and Federal Section

DATE: January 9, 2018

AGENDA ITEM: Agenda Item 26, Colorado River WM Programmatic Agreement

Background: Colorado has had continuous commercial cloud seeding operations since 1976 at Vail & Beaver Creek Ski areas. Today there are seven permitted programs in the Central mountains along I-70, Vail & Beaver Creek, Grand Mesa, Gunnison, Western Dolores/Telluride, the Western San Juan Mountains, and Eastern San Juan Mountains. After the drought of the early 2000s several local water district sponsored programs asked for CWCB assistance. In 2004 the CWCB started a grants program. In 2005 Metro Water District of Southern California, CWCB, and Desert Research Institute authored a white paper to utilize cloud seeding as a strategy for Colorado River water supplies. That year a trial grant was given to Southwestern WCD from the Lower Basin. In 2007 formal state-to-state agreements were signed between three Lower Basin Water users and the CWCB. Similar agreements were signed between the Lower Basin and Utah and Wyoming. There was also an agreement between the State of New Mexico and the CWCB for grants for cloud seeding in Eastern San Juan Mountains. From 2007 through 2018 about \$3M was matched with approximately \$3M in CWCB funds to provide about 35% of the annual funding each year for our cloud seeding programs. There are forty sponsors of cloud seeding in Colorado including four states, and many local water districts, cities, and ski areas.

In 2018 the Seven states along the Colorado River have come to agreement to sign one agreement that is more of programmatic approach around cooperative cloud seeding for water supplies. The Lower Basin will provide grants matching grants through the CWCB to locally sponsored cloud seeding in Colorado. The agreement budgets up to \$500,000 per state for Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming and will be valid for the next nine years through 2026. Based on a favorable Executive Session discussion staff will be asking the Board to give the CWCB director support to sign the agreement. All seven states are taking this agreement to their boards early in 2018 with the hopes that this agreement and new processes will be in place this summer.

Summary

This is an action item. Staff recommends the Board give Director Rebecca Mitchell authority and support to sign the Colorado River Weather Modification Cooperative Program Agreement.

