



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Brent Newman, Interstate, Federal, & Water Information Section

DATE: September 18, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: 7. Colorado River Drought Contingency Planning and Demand Management Feasibility

This is an informational item, with no formal Board action requested.

Background

Since January 2018, CWCB staff and members of the Attorney General’s Office have been conducting a series of outreach presentations across Colorado regarding drought contingency planning efforts underway in the Colorado River Basin. Consistent with direction from the Board, these efforts have served dual purposes: to educate and inform interested water rights holders and other stakeholders about the status of ongoing efforts to develop drought contingency plans in the Upper and Lower Colorado River Basins, and to solicit feedback from Colorado water users regarding the concept of demand management as a potential tool for avoiding compact administration in the event of continued drought or worsening hydrology.

At the November 15, 2018 Board meeting, the Board unanimously approved “Support and Policy Statements Regarding Colorado River Drought Contingency Plans, Demand Management, and Compact Administration,” which set out the Board’s policy to:

“Develop the state’s position and approach on whether and how to develop any Upper Basin Demand Management Program that could potentially be implemented within Colorado consistent with state law to avoid or mitigate the risk of involuntary compact curtailment and to enhance certainty and security in the Colorado River water supply.”

This policy statement also laid out a strategy for formulating the state’s demand management position, identifying several elements for investigation and vetting through a thorough public review process. The statement also provides initial sideboards for such an investigation, informed by Board discussion and water user input to that point.

At the March 2019 Board meeting, the Board approved a scope of work for the “2019 Work Plan for Intrastate Demand Management Feasibility Investigations.” Since the



July meeting, several ongoing action items pursuant to the Work Plan have been accomplished:

- Demand Management Workgroups have begun meeting in locations across the state.
- CWCB staff participated in a panel at Colorado Water Congress' Summer Conference on the topic of DCP and Demand Management feasibility.
- CWCB staff led the first Regional Workshop in Steamboat Springs following Water Congress.
- CWCB have brought on a new staff member to coordinate ongoing Demand Management feasibility efforts.
- On September 11, CWCB staff will participate in a discussion with the Interim Water Resources Review Committee on the topic of drought contingency planning, Demand Management feasibility investigations, and the implementation of the 2019 Work Plan.

Staff recommendation

This is an informational item, with no formal Board action required. Staff will provide an update of outreach efforts since the July meeting, and discuss progress on elements of the 2019 Work Plan.

