



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street, Room 718
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441
F (303) 866-4474

Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Rebecca Mitchell, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Amy Ostdiek, Interstate, Federal, and Water Information Section

DATE: January 16, 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 13 - Colorado River Updates

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

Demand Management Feasibility Investigation

At the March 2019 Board meeting, the Board approved a scope of work for the “2019 Work Plan for Intrastate Demand Management Feasibility Investigations.” Pursuant to the Board’s November 2018 Support and Policy Statement, the focus of this work is to help 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.”

The 2019 Work Plan has three components: (1) workgroups; (2) regional workshops; and (3) continued education and outreach. Pursuant to this direction, CWCB staff have facilitated several workgroup meetings across the state, all of which have been open to the public with opportunity for public comment. Staff looks forward to hosting the second regional workshop at the Colorado Water Congress conference on January 29, 9:00-11:30 am. Additionally, staff have prioritized continued education and outreach across the state relating to Demand Management. Information about upcoming workshops and workgroup meetings, as well as report outs from each meeting, are posted on the CWCB website.

The work underway pursuant to the 2019 Work Plan represents only the first stage in the Demand Management feasibility investigation. The other Upper Division States are also engaged in their own Demand Management feasibility analyses. Staff of CWCB and the Attorney General’s Office continue to coordinate with the other Upper Division States throughout this process.

CWCB staff plan to seek additional guidance from the Board in Summer 2020 relating to potential net steps of the feasibility investigation.



Update on the Reassessment of the 2007 Interim Guidelines

The 2007 Interim Guidelines, which provide for the coordinated operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead, require the Secretary to begin formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the Guidelines no later than December 31, 2020. In doing so, the Secretary must consult with the seven Colorado River Basin States, including Colorado. At the Colorado River Water Users Association Meeting in December, Secretary Bernhardt announced that in early 2020, Reclamation would begin analyzing the effectiveness of the Guidelines by, among other things, looking back at how the Guidelines have performed compared to what was expected. As part of this process, Colorado and the other states anticipate providing input to help inform the process. This process will not focus on reservoir operations going forward. Rather, Interior will commence that analysis after it has gathered sufficient information regarding the effectiveness of the current guidelines. The analysis of how the guidelines have performed, coupled with experience gained in implementation of the Drought Contingency Plans, will help inform future discussions.

Colorado's Commissioner is working with CWCB staff and the Attorney General's Office to prepare for future negotiations relating to the Guidelines. In doing so, she will engage in outreach efforts throughout the state to gather feedback from water users, tribes, and other interested stakeholders. These efforts will help inform Colorado's positions going forward.

Staff recommendation

This is an informational item, with no formal Board action required. Staff will provide an update on the feasibility investigation in Summer 2020 to seek guidance on the next stages of the feasibility investigation.

