



**COLORADO**

**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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**TO:** Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

**FROM:** Amy Ostdiek

**DATE:** May 8, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item 6: Colorado River Updates

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## Demand Management

CWCB staff and the Demand Management Project Management Team have been working pursuant to the Demand Management Work Plan, adopted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board in March 2019. The Work Plan outlined four key elements of the initial stage of the Feasibility Investigation: (1) Establish Workgroups comprised of Colorado River experts from across the state; (2) Hold three Regional Workshops; (3) Conduct Education and Outreach; and (4) Provide a Report summarizing this work to the Board to inform the Board's determination as to next steps. The purpose of this initial stage of the investigation was to convene stakeholders, water users, interested parties, and Colorado River experts, in a grassroots effort to assist in identifying key threshold issues associated with a potential Demand Management program, and to frame those issues for the Board's consideration in order for the Board to determine next steps in the process. The Interbasin Compact Committee has also contributed to the ongoing discussion, particularly relating to the issue of equity.

As the state agency charged with setting state water policy, it is the Colorado Water Conservation Board's charge to develop and guide the next steps of the feasibility investigation and eventually, to make the ultimate determination of whether Demand Management is feasible and advisable for the State of Colorado. The Project Management Team intends to engage the Board in a discussion about the work performed to date pursuant to the Work Plan, and to seek direction on next steps in Colorado's feasibility investigation.

At the July 2020 Board meeting, the Project Management Team will provide a summary and report out on the topics discussed among the workgroups and the IBCC, at regional workshops, and more broadly in community outreach. This will be followed by a Board workshop focused entirely on Demand Management, to be scheduled as circumstances permit in July or August 2020. The purpose of this workshop will be to provide an opportunity for the Board to focus on the work done and knowledge gained



throughout the course of the 2019 Work Plan, and will include discussion and analysis of: (1) key threshold issues identified by the workgroups and the IBCC as summarized in the July 2020 report to the Board; (2) consideration of potential options for filling remaining data gaps identified in the report and by the Board; and (3) discussion of the communications strategy, and specifically, how Board members can be more actively engaged in public outreach and serve as key resources throughout the next stage of the feasibility investigation.

Relating to the second point regarding potential options for filling remaining data gaps, the Project Management Team anticipates the literature review to be performed by the consultants will help to inform this discussion. CWCB staff and the Project Management Team have been working to identify, select, and get consultants under contract throughout the first stage of the feasibility investigation. All consultants are now under contract and have begun their work. The consultants' work will focus on literature reviews relevant to each workgroup's subject matter, as well as identification of data gaps and potential mechanisms for addressing them. The consultants selected are as follows:

- WestWater Research: agricultural impacts; economic impacts and local government; funding
- SGM: environmental considerations; water data/monitoring and verification; facilitation; project management
- CDR: education and outreach

The work of the workgroups to date, as well their work product to come, will help inform the scope of the consultants' literature reviews. The Project Management Team has provided regular updates to the Board on the RFP process, and anticipates the updates will become more substantive now that the consultants have begun their work.

CWCB staff will not offer recommendations for Board action until the Board has had the opportunity to fully consider the work done to date pursuant to the 2019 Work Plan at the Demand Management Workshop and provide their input to CWCB staff. The Project Management Team looks forward to discussing all of these issues in more detail with the Board in July 2020 and after.

## 2007 Guidelines

The Bureau of Reclamation is currently analyzing the operational effectiveness of the 2007 Guidelines (effectiveness review). The Bureau of Reclamation recently held webinars at which they explained the scope and general approach of this review. They are currently seeking comments on the scope of this review. In coordination with the other six Colorado River Basin States, staff from the Attorney General's Office and CWCB staff are working on draft comments. This effort is focused on ensuring



Colorado's interests are represented in this review while maintaining flexibility moving forward and remaining mindful of the limited scope of the effectiveness review. We will continue to hold regular meetings and provide updates to Colorado's tribes, water users, and key stakeholders throughout this process.

