



**THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Developing and Conserving the Waters in the  
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES  
West Building – 841 East Second Avenue  
DURANGO, COLORADO 81301  
(970) 247-1302

December 21, 2018

Southwest Basin Roundtable  
Mike Preston, Chair  
65 Cactus Drive  
Cortez, CO 81321

*RE: Update on SWCD's Activities and Position on the Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan*

Dear Southwest Basin Roundtable Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) to express our appreciation for the Southwest Basin Roundtable's support in asking the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to adopt a set of basic principles that will govern any exploration or implementation of a demand management program within Colorado. As you are likely aware, the CWCB adopted a policy regarding Colorado River Drought Contingency Plans, Demand Management, and Compact Administration at their November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, which spoke to several of the concerns we brought forward on behalf of our communities.

After review of the draft interstate agreements that would govern the Upper and Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plans and the CWCB's policy, the SWCD Board voted at its December meeting to support Colorado's participation in the Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan, and to continue education and outreach efforts within our District on Colorado River issues. The Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC), which consists of a representative from Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, and the federal government, held its annual meeting the following week in Las Vegas at the Colorado River Water Users Association conference. At that meeting, the UCRC voted to approve the Upper Basin's Drought Contingency Plan and the "companion agreement" that links the Upper and Lower Basin's Drought Contingency Plans together.<sup>1</sup> The Lower Basin has made considerable progress on its Drought Contingency Plan. However, their plan has not been finalized yet because there is still some disagreement within Arizona and California. The Commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has tasked the Colorado River Basin states with completing both drought contingency plans by January 31, 2019 and, if that does

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<sup>1</sup> Both SWCD's support and the UCRC's approval are contingent on the Lower Basin approving its Drought Contingency Plan and the final DCP-related agreements remaining in substantially the same form as the "drafts" that were released to the public in early October.

not occur, informed the Colorado River Basin States that the Federal Government will decide on a course of action to protect the Colorado River Basin.

We expect that Colorado River issues will continue to be of the utmost importance to SWCD and our constituents. If you have not done so already, I encourage you to visit our website (<https://swwcd.org/programs/colorado-river-advocacy/>) to find out more about these issues as well as to view many of the more recent Colorado River documents, such as the draft interstate agreements, the letters that were sent in support of the principles sought by SWCD and the Colorado River Water Conservation District, and the CWCB's policy. We look forward to the continued communication with our community leaders and water users across the region as drought contingency planning efforts move forward, including any potential development of a voluntary, compensated, and temporary demand management program.

Again, thank you for your swift action and support. Please do not hesitate to call or email with questions.

Best regards,



Bruce Whitehead  
Executive Director