



March 11, 2019

An Open Letter to California's Water Agencies on the Colorado River:

Imperial Irrigation District
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Palo Verde Irrigation District
Coachella Valley Water District
Colorado River Board of California

RE: Moving Forward on the Colorado River Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan (DCP)

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and Audubon publicly acknowledge and applaud the significant efforts of Southern California water agencies in working to finalize the Colorado River Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan agreements (DCP) over the past several years. The DCP is a critically important step forward to protect the communities, economy, and environment across the basin. We strongly support completion of the DCP.

The shared commitment to the DCP has been necessitated by 19 years of drought in the Colorado River Basin. Water users and public agencies up and down the basin adopted the Interim Surplus Shortage Sharing Guidelines (Interim Guidelines) in 2007 to outline how water managers would deal with and apportion cutbacks in the event of shortage. This marked an important step forward in interstate collaboration and coordination, but as the drought continued, it became apparent that additional steps would be needed due to unprecedented (at least in the record), dry hydrologic conditions.

To that end, the seven Colorado River basin states began negotiating the DCP more than five years ago. The DCP is a critical and necessary step that will help to fend off economic and environmental catastrophe in the event of ongoing extreme drought. EDF and Audubon have worked assiduously alongside public agencies, water users, and other NGOs to get the DCP done and are heartened that we are nearly there.

As we all near the finish line, we appreciate that there are outstanding concerns about the Salton Sea. We urge the California agencies and federal partners to continue the spirit of collaboration they adopted in drafting the DCP to face this challenge as well. Working together

creatively and constructively, we can overcome the obstacles that have slowed progress in implementing the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) and ensuring ample funding for projects that will make a difference for people and the environment at the Salton Sea.

The Colorado River Basin water supply faces enormous risks without the DCP, and it is everyone's interests that this effort succeed. We look forward to working with the California agencies and our federal partners to finalize the DCP and improve conditions at the Salton Sea.

Sincerely,



Maurice Hall
Associate Vice President, Ecosystems-Water
Environmental Defense Fund



Sarah Rose
Executive Director
Audubon California