

its important mission.

The Colorado River Board (Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. The Board participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin states in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act (P.L. 92-500), the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards every three years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported in this testimony is consistent with the Forum's 2011 Plan of Implementation. The Forum's 2011 Plan of Implementation can be found on this website: <http://www.coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2011%20REVIEW-October.pdf>. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

The Program benefits both the Upper Basin water users through more efficient water management and the Lower Basin water users through reduced salinity concentration of Colorado River water. Waters from the Colorado River are used by approximately 40 million people for municipal and industrial purposes and used to irrigate approximately 4 million acres in the United States. Natural and man-induced salt loading to the Colorado River creates environmental and economic damages. Reclamation has estimated the current *quantifiable* damages within the Colorado River Basin as a result of increased concentrations of salt at about \$376 million per year. Modeling by Reclamation indicates that the *quantifiable* damages would rise to

approximately \$577 million by the year 2030 without continuation of the Program as identified in the 2011 Plan of Implementation. For example, damages resulting from high concentrations of salt occur from:

- a reduction in the yield of salt-sensitive crops and increased water use for leaching in the agricultural sector;
- a reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;
- an increase in the use of water for cooling, and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
- an increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
- a decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector;
- difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, and an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins, and fewer opportunities for recycling due to groundwater quality deterioration; and
- increased use of imported water for leaching and the cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycling water in the municipal sector.

In the case of the Colorado River salinity control effort, the watershed to be considered

stretches more than 1,400 miles from the River's headwater in the Rocky Mountains to the River's terminus in the Gulf of California in Mexico. Each year the NRCS State Conservationists for Colorado, Utah and Wyoming prepare a three-year funding plan for the salinity efforts under EQIP. The Forum supports this funding plan which recognizes the need for \$17.3M in FY 2014. This includes the moneys needed for both farm and technical assistance. State and local cost-sharing is triggered by the federal appropriation. The states and local producers are able and anxious to participate in the Program.

In order for the economic benefits associated with constraining the salinity levels within the Colorado River Basin, it is essential that Congress continue to provide funds to the USDA to allow it to provide needed technical support to agricultural producers. Over the past twenty-nine years, the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program has proven to be a very cost-effective and collaborative approach to help mitigate the impacts of the salinity of Colorado River water. Continued federal funding of the USDA elements of this important Basin-wide program is essential to maintaining this effort.

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March 27, 2013

**Statement of
the
Colorado River Board of California

to the
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development**

**Presented by
Tanya M. Trujillo, Executive Director
March 27, 2013**

**Support for Fiscal Year 2014 Funding of \$15.4 Million
for the Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation's
Basinwide Salinity Control Program**

This statement is in support of Fiscal Year 2014 funding for the Department of the Interior's implementation of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 (Act) (P.L. 93-320). The Act authorized the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, (Program), a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River. In the Act, Congress designated the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to be the lead agency for salinity control in the Colorado River Basin. Reclamation primarily institutes salinity control through its Basinwide Program, which was established by Congress through an amendment to the Act in 1995. Funding levels for the Basinwide Program have fallen behind in recent years, and a funding level of \$15.4 million is required in 2014 to prevent further degradation of the quality of the Colorado River and the resulting economic damages.

Waters from the Colorado River are used by approximately 40 million people for municipal and industrial purposes and used to irrigate approximately 4 million acres in the United States. The Colorado River serves close to 20 million residents of southern California, including municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users in Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial counties. Natural and man-induced salt loading to the Colorado River creates environmental and economic damages. Reclamation has estimated the current *quantifiable* damages with the Colorado River Basin as a result of increased concentrations of salt at about \$376 million per year. Modeling by Reclamation indicates that the *quantifiable* damages would rise to approximately \$577 million by the year 2030 without continuation of the Program.

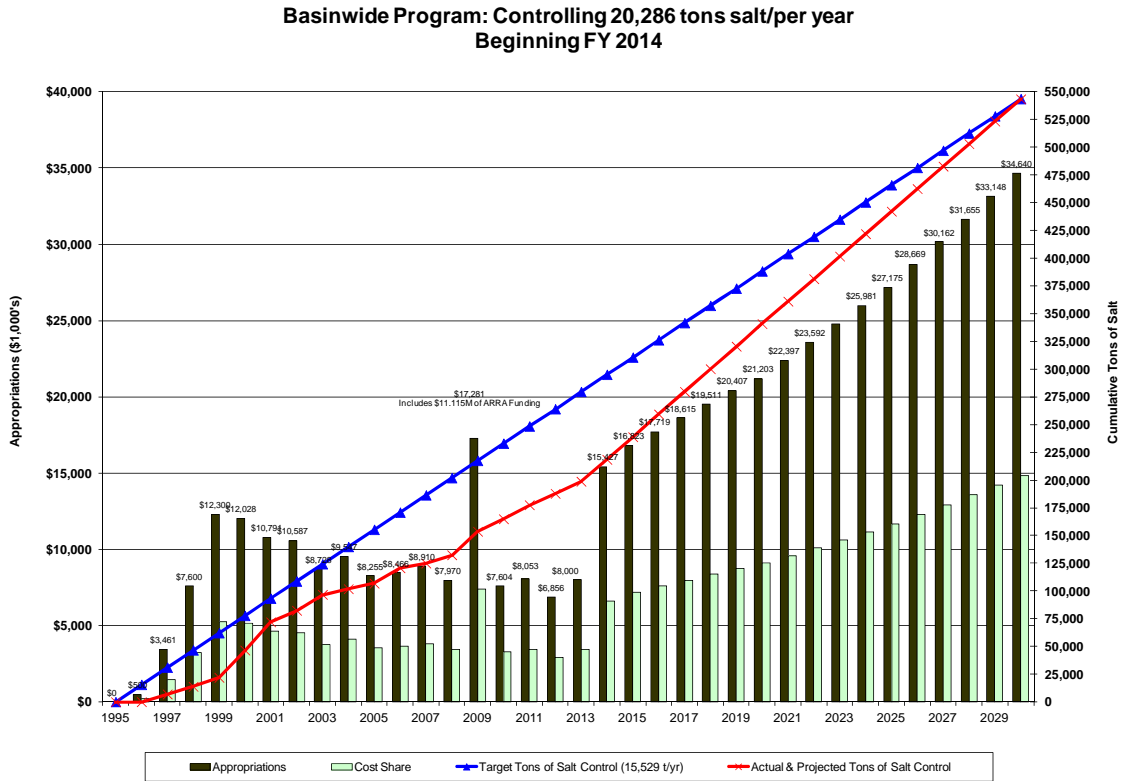
The Colorado River Board (Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system.

The Board participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin states in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act (P.L. 92-500), the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards every three years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported in this testimony is consistent with the Forum's 2011 Plan of Implementation. The Forum's 2011 Plan of Implementation can be found on this website: <http://www.coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2011%20REVIEW-October.pdf>. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico. For example, damages occur from:

- a reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use for leaching in the agricultural sector;
- a reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;
- an increase in the use of water for cooling, and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
- an increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
- a decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector;
- difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins, and fewer opportunities for recycling and reuse of the water due to groundwater quality deterioration; and
- increased use of imported water for leaching and the cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycled water.

Some of the most cost-effective salinity control opportunities occur when Reclamation can improve irrigation delivery systems in a coordinated fashion with the activities of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) programs working with landowners to improve on-farm irrigation systems. Shortfalls in Reclamation's Basinwide Program funding have led to inefficiencies in the implementation of the overall salinity control program. The funding amount

identified above, and in the graph below, are required to get the Basinwide Program back on pace with the implementation schedule identified in the 2011 Plan of Implementation.



The graph above shows the needed funding levels for FY-2014 through 2030 with the black bars showing the appropriated amount and the green bar showing the commensurate cost share. In order for the economic benefits associated with constraining the salinity levels within the Colorado River Basin, it is essential that Congress continue to provide funds to Reclamation’s Basinwide program. Over the past twenty-nine years, the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program has proven to be a very cost-effective and collaborative approach to help mitigate the impacts of the salinity of Colorado River water. Continued federal funding of the Department of the Interior’s elements of this important Basin-wide program is essential to maintaining this effort.

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April 19, 2013

**Statement of
the
Colorado River Board of California

to the
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and related Agencies**

**Presented by
Tanya M. Trujillo, Executive Director
April 19, 2013**

**Support for Fiscal Year 2014 Federal Funding
of \$5.2 Million for the Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
to assist in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, with \$1,500,000
to be designated specifically to identified salinity control efforts**

This testimony is in support of Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 funding for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) associated with the sub-activity that assists Title II of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-320). This long-standing successful and cost-effective salinity control program in the Colorado River Basin is being carried out pursuant to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act and the Clean Water Act (P.L. 92-500).

The Colorado River Board of California (Colorado River Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. In this capacity, California participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin states through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River water quality standards every three years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported in this testimony is consistent with the Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation*. The Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation* can be found on this website: <http://www.coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2011%20REVIEW-October.pdf>. If adequate funds are

not appropriated, significant damages associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

The EPA has determined that more than sixty-percent of the salt load of the Colorado River comes from natural sources. Due to geological conditions, much of the lands that are controlled and managed by BLM are major contributors of salt to the Colorado River system. Past management practices have led to human-induced and accelerated erosion processes from which soil and rocks have been deposited in various stream beds or flood plains. As a result, salts are dissolved and enter the Colorado River system causing water quality problems downstream.

Through passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act in 1974, Congress recognized that much of the salts in the Colorado River originate on federally-owned lands. Title I of the Salinity Control Act deals with the U.S. commitment to efforts related to maintaining the quality of waters being delivered to Mexico pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. Title II of the Act deals with improving the quality of the water delivered to U.S. users. In 1984, Congress amended the Salinity Control Act and directed that the Secretary of the Interior develop a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from lands administered by BLM. In 2000, Congress reiterated its directive to the Secretary and requested a report on the implementation of BLM's program (Public Law 106-459). In 2003, BLM employed a Salinity Coordinator to coordinate BLM efforts in the Colorado River Basin states to pursue salinity control studies and to implement specific salinity control practices. With a significant portion of the salt load of the Colorado River coming from BLM-administered lands, the BLM portion of the overall program is essential to the success of the entire effort.

The BLM's Budget Justification Document for FY-2013 has stated that the BLM continues to implement on-the-ground projects, evaluate progress in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and report salinity control measures in order to further the Plan of Implementation associated with the Federal Salinity Control Program in the Colorado River Basin. The BLM Budget, as proposed in the BLM Budget Justification Document, calls for six key performance goals within the BLM's Soil, Water, and Air Management Program. One of the goals is to reduce saline runoff from public lands into the Colorado River system by 10,000 to 20,000 tons of salt from new projects. Additionally, the BLM Budget Justification Document reported a cumulative salt-loading reduction from ongoing BLM efforts in 2011 that totaled 126,000 tons per year. The Soil, Water and Air Management Program sub-activity is responsible for reducing the discharge of salts to waters of the Colorado River Basin to ensure usable water supplies to tens of millions of downstream users of which nearly 20 million are located in Southern California.

Congress has charged federal agencies, including the BLM, to proceed with programs to control the salinity of the Colorado River. BLM's rangeland improvement programs can lead to some of the most cost-effective salinity control measures available. These measures significantly complement programs and activities being considered for implementation by Reclamation through its Basin-wide Program and by the USDA through its on-farm Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The 2012 Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council report states that the funding from BLM's Soil, Water and Air Program has been generally expended on studies, research, and implementation. These studies and research have successfully identified several different tools which could be used to reduce salinity contributions to the Colorado River from publicly administered lands. BLM's efforts are now transitioning towards implementation of salinity control. During the past several years proposals for implementation of salinity control specific efforts have exceeded more than \$1.5 million. The Advisory Council's 2012 report recommends that BLM make at least \$1.5 million available annually for salinity-specific activities in addition to the \$5.2 million expended under the Soil, Water and Air Program for general improvements within the Colorado River Basin. The Colorado River Board supports the Advisory Council's recommendation and urges the Subcommittee to specifically designate \$1.5 million for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program.

Over the twenty-nine years since the passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, much has been learned about the impact of salts in the Colorado River system. Currently, the salinity concentration of Colorado River water causes about \$376 million in quantifiable damages in the United States annually. Economic and hydrologic modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages could rise to more than \$577 million by the year 2030 without the continuation of the Salinity Control Program. For example, damages can be incurred related to the following activities:

- A reduction in the yield of salt-sensitive crops and increased water use for leaching in the agricultural sector;
- A reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;
- An increase in the use of water for cooling, and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
- An increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
- A decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector;
- Difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins, and fewer opportunities for recycling and reuse of the water due to groundwater quality deterioration;

- Increased use of imported water for leaching and the cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycled water.

In addition, the federal government has made significant commitments to the Republic of Mexico and to the seven Colorado River Basin states with regard to the delivery of quality water pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. In order for those commitments to be honored, it is essential that in FY-2014, and in future fiscal years, that the Congress continue to provide adequate funds to BLM for its salinity control activities within the Colorado River Basin.

The Colorado River is, and will continue to be, a major and vital water resource to the nearly 20 million residents of southern California, including municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties. The protection and improvement of Colorado River water quality through an effective salinity control program will avoid the additional economic damages to users in California and the other states that rely on Colorado River water resources.

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April 19, 2013

**Statement of
the
Colorado River Board of California

to the
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies**

**Presented by
Tanya M. Trujillo, Executive Director
April 19, 2013**

**Support for Fiscal Year 2014 Federal Funding of \$17 million to \$18 million annually of the
U.S. Department of Agriculture's Environmental Quality Incentives Program for the
Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program**

This testimony is in support of funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its on-farm Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (Program) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014. This program has been carried out through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act (P.L. 93-320) (Act), since it was enacted by Congress in 1974. Further, with the enactment of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act (FAIRA) in 1996 (P.L. 104-127), Congress directed that the Program should continue to be implemented as one of the components of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Finally, Congress passed the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA) in 2008, that addressed the cost-sharing required from the Basin Funds, and redesignated the cost-sharing requirement as the Basin States Program (BSP). Currently, the BSP provides approximately thirty percent of the total amount that will be spent each year by the combined EQIP and BSP efforts.

The Salinity Control Program benefits both the Upper Basin water users through more efficient water management and the Lower Basin water users, through reduced salinity concentration of Colorado River water. For example, California's Colorado River water users continue to suffer economic damages in the hundreds of million of dollars per year due to the current salinity of the Colorado River.

The Colorado River Board of California (Colorado River Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. In this capacity, California participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin

states through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act (P.L. 92-500), the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards every three years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported in this testimony is consistent with the Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation*. The Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation* can be found on this website: <http://www.coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2011%20REVIEW-October.pdf>. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

Currently, the salinity concentration of Colorado River water causes about \$376 million in quantifiable damages in the United States annually. Economic and hydrologic modeling by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) indicates that the quantifiable damages could rise to more than \$577 million by the year 2030 without the continuation of the Salinity Control Program as identified in the *2011 Plan of Implementation*. For example, salinity damages occur from:

- A reduction in the yield of salt-sensitive crops and increased water use for leaching in the agricultural sector;
- A reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;
- An increase in the use of water for cooling, and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
- An increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
- A decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector;
- Difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, and an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins, and fewer opportunities for recycling due to groundwater quality deterioration; and
- Increased use of imported water for leaching and the cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycled water.

In recent fiscal years, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has directed that

about \$17 million to \$18 million of EQIP funds be used for the Salinity Control Program. The Colorado River Board respectfully urges the Subcommittee to support funding for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program for FY-2014 at least at this level.

The Forum has taken the position that funding for the Program should be consistent with the three-year funding plan submitted by the three NRCS State Conservationists for Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. The NRCS funding plan for 2014 is \$17.3 million and includes both farm and technical assistance program elements. It should also be pointed out that state and local cost-sharing is triggered by federal appropriations.

In conclusion, the Colorado River Board of California recognizes that the federal government has made significant commitments to the seven Colorado River Basin States with regard to the delivery of Colorado River water. In order for those commitments to continue to be honored, it is essential that Congress continue to provide funds to the USDA to allow it to provide needed technical support to agricultural producers for addressing salinity control activities in the Colorado River Basin. Over the past twenty-nine years, the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control program has proven to be a very cost-effective and collaborative approach to help mitigate the impacts of the salinity of Colorado River water. Continued federal funding of the USDA elements of this important Basin-wide program is essential to maintaining this effort.

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April 19, 2013

**Statement of
the
Colorado River Board of California

to the
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development**

**Presented by
Tanya M. Trujillo, Executive Director
April 19, 2013**

**Support for Fiscal Year 2014 Federal Funding
of \$15.4 Million for the Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation's
Basin-wide Salinity Control Program**

This testimony is in support of Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 funding for the Department of the Interior for the Title II Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-320). In the Act, Congress designated the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to be the lead agency for salinity control in the Colorado River Basin. For nearly twenty-nine years this very successful and cost-effective program has been carried out pursuant to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act and the Clean Water Act (P.L. 92-500). California's Colorado River water users are presently suffering economic damages in the hundreds of millions of dollars per year due to the River's salinity.

The Colorado River Board of California (Colorado River Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. In this capacity, California participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin states through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards every three years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported by this testimony is consistent with the Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation* for continued salinity control efforts within the Colorado River Basin. The Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation* can be found on this website: <http://www.coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2011%20REVIEW-October.pdf>. If adequate funds are not appropriated to Reclamation's Basin-wide Program, significant damages

associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

The *2011 Plan of Implementation*, as adopted by the states and approved by EPA, calls for 368,000 tons of additional salinity control measures to be implemented by Reclamation by 2030, or approximately 20,000 tons of additional salinity control measures each year. Based on current program cost levels, Reclamation's funding under its Basinwide Program needs to be at least \$15.4 million. This level of appropriation requested in this testimony is in keeping with the adopted *2011 Plan of Implementation*.

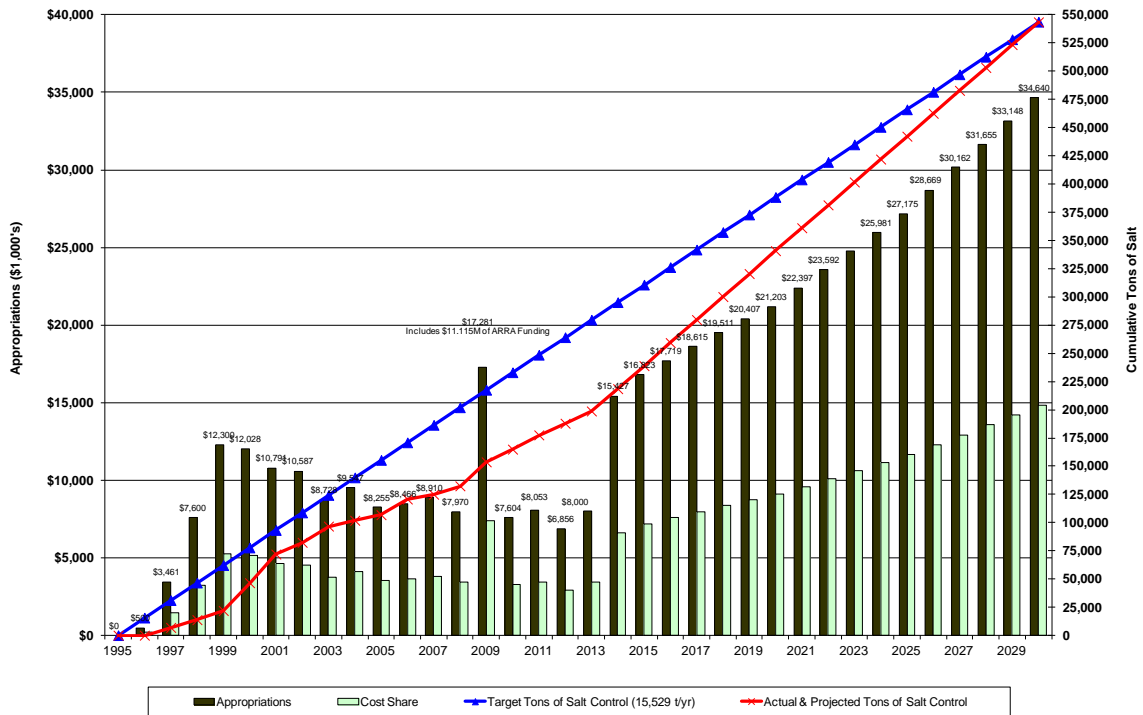
Waters from the Colorado River are used by approximately 35 million people for municipal and industrial purposes and used to irrigate approximately 4 million acres of agricultural lands in the United States. Currently, the salinity concentration of Colorado River water causes about \$376 million in quantifiable damages in the United States annually. Economic and hydrologic modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages could rise to more than \$577 million by the year 2030 without the continuation of Basin-wide salinity control measures as identified in the *2011 Plan of Implementation*. Significant un-quantified damages also occur. For example, damages occur from:

- A reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use for leaching in the agricultural sector;
- A reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;
- An increase in the use of water for cooling, and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
- An increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
- A decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector;
- Difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins, and fewer opportunities for recycling and reuse of the water due to groundwater quality deterioration; and

- Increased use of imported water for leaching and the cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycled water.

Some of the most cost-effective salinity control opportunities occur when Reclamation can improve irrigation delivery systems in a coordinated fashion with the activities of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) programs working with landowners to improve on-farm irrigation systems. With the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), more on-farm funds are available and it continues to be important to ensure that there are adequate Reclamation funds available to maximize Reclamation's effectiveness in addressing water delivery system improvements. Shortfalls in recent Basinwide Program funding have led to inefficiencies in the implementation of the overall salinity control program. The funding amount identified above, and in the graph below, are required to get the Basinwide Program back on pace with the implementation schedule identified in the *2011 Plan of Implementation*.

**Basinwide Program: Controlling 20,286 tons salt/per year
 Beginning FY 2014**



In addition, the Colorado River Board recognizes that the federal government has made significant commitments to the Republic of Mexico and to the seven Colorado River Basin

states with regard to the delivery of quality water pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty with Mexico. In order for those commitments to be honored, it is essential that in FY-2014, and in future fiscal years, that Congress provide funds to the Bureau of Reclamation for the continued operation of current projects.

The Colorado River is, and will continue to be, a major and vital water resource to the nearly 20 million residents of southern California, including municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users in Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial counties. The protection and improvement of Colorado River water quality through an effective salinity control program will avoid the additional economic damages to users in California and the other states that rely on the Colorado River.

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**Presented by
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April 19, 2013**

**Support for Fiscal Year 2014 Federal Funding
of \$5.2 Million for the Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
to assist in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, with \$1.5 Million
to be designated specifically to identified salinity control efforts**

This testimony is in support of Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 funding for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) associated with the sub-activity that assists Title II of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-320). This long-standing successful and cost-effective salinity control program in the Colorado River Basin is being carried out pursuant to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act and the Clean Water Act (P.L. 92-500).

The Colorado River Board of California (Colorado River Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. In this capacity, California participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin states through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River water quality standards every three years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported in this testimony is consistent with the Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation*. The Forum's *2011 Plan of Implementation* can be found on this website: <http://www.coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2011%20REVIEW-October.pdf>. If adequate funds are not

appropriated, significant damages associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

The EPA has determined that more than sixty-percent of the salt load of the Colorado River comes from natural sources. Due to geological conditions, much of the lands that are controlled and managed by BLM are major contributors of salt to the Colorado River system. Past management practices have led to human-induced and accelerated erosion processes from which soil and rocks have been deposited in various stream beds or flood plains. As a result, salts are dissolved and enter the Colorado River system causing water quality problems downstream.

Through passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act in 1974, Congress recognized that much of the salts in the Colorado River originate on federally-owned lands. Title I of the Salinity Control Act deals with the U.S. commitment to efforts related to maintaining the quality of waters being delivered to Mexico pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. Title II of the Act deals with improving the quality of the water delivered to U.S. users. In 1984, Congress amended the Salinity Control Act and directed that the Secretary of the Interior develop a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from lands administered by BLM. In 2000, Congress reiterated its directive to the Secretary and requested a report on the implementation of BLM's program (Public Law 106-459). In 2003, BLM employed a Salinity Coordinator to coordinate BLM efforts in the Colorado River Basin states to pursue salinity control studies and to implement specific salinity control practices. With a significant portion of the salt load of the Colorado River coming from BLM-administered lands, the BLM portion of the overall program is essential to the success of the entire effort.

The BLM's Budget Justification Document for FY-2013 has stated that the BLM continues to implement on-the-ground projects, evaluate progress in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and report salinity control measures in order to further the Plan of Implementation associated with the Federal Salinity Control Program in the Colorado River Basin. The BLM Budget, as proposed in the BLM Budget Justification Document, calls for six key performance goals within the BLM's Soil, Water, and Air Management Program. One of the goals is to reduce saline runoff from public lands into the Colorado River system by 10,000 to 20,000 tons of salt from new projects. Additionally, the BLM Budget Justification Document reported a cumulative salt-loading reduction from ongoing BLM efforts in 2011 that totaled 126,000 tons per year. The Soil, Water and Air Management Program sub-activity is responsible for reducing the discharge of salts to waters of the Colorado River Basin to ensure usable water supplies to tens of millions of downstream users of which nearly 20 million are located in Southern California.

Congress has charged federal agencies, including the BLM, to proceed with programs to control the salinity of the Colorado River. BLM's rangeland improvement programs can lead to some of the most cost-effective salinity control measures available. These measures significantly complement

programs and activities being considered for implementation by Reclamation through its Basin-wide Program and by the USDA through its on-farm Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The 2012 Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council report states that the funding from BLM's Soil, Water and Air Program has been generally expended on studies, research, and implementation. These studies and research have successfully identified several different tools which could be used to reduce salinity contributions to the Colorado River from publicly administered lands. BLM's efforts are now transitioning towards implementation of salinity control. During the past several years proposals for implementation of salinity control specific efforts have exceeded more than \$1.5 million. The Advisory Council's 2012 report recommends that BLM make at least \$1.5 million available annually for salinity-specific activities in addition to the \$5.2 million expended under the Soil, Water and Air Program for general improvements within the Colorado River Basin. The Colorado River Board supports the Advisory Council's recommendation and urges the Subcommittee to specifically designate \$1.5 million for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program.

Over the twenty-nine years since the passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, much has been learned about the impact of salts in the Colorado River system. Currently, the salinity concentration of Colorado River water causes about \$376 million in quantifiable damages in the United States annually. Economic and hydrologic modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages could rise to more than \$577 million by the year 2030 without the continuation of the Salinity Control Program. For example, damages can be incurred related to the following activities:

- A reduction in the yield of salt-sensitive crops and increased water use for leaching in the agricultural sector;
- A reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;
- An increase in the use of water for cooling, and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
- An increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
- A decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector;
- Difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, an increase in desalination and

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brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins, and fewer opportunities for recycling and reuse of the water due to groundwater quality deterioration;

- Increased use of imported water for leaching and the cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycled water.

In addition, the federal government has made significant commitments to the Republic of Mexico and to the seven Colorado River Basin states with regard to the delivery of quality water pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. In order for those commitments to be honored, it is essential that in FY-2014, and in future fiscal years, that the Congress continue to provide adequate funds to BLM for its salinity control activities within the Colorado River Basin.

The Colorado River is, and will continue to be, a major and vital water resource to the nearly 20 million residents of southern California, including municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties. The protection and improvement of Colorado River water quality through an effective salinity control program will avoid the additional economic damages to users in California and the other states that rely on Colorado River water resources.