



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Office of the General Manager

May 21, 2024

The Honorable Congressman Cliff Bentz, Chair
House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries
1331 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Congressman Jared Huffman, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries
1331 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for Colorado River Salinity Control Fix Act, H.R. 7872

Dear Chair Bentz and Ranking Member Huffman:

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) supports the Colorado River Salinity Control Fix Act, H.R. 7872, and appreciates you holding a hearing on the bill. Metropolitan is the largest wholesale drinking water in the nation, providing water for 26 public member agencies to deliver to nearly 19 million people living in Southern California. Roughly one-half of Metropolitan's imported water comes from the Colorado River.

Since 1972, the Colorado River Basin (CRB) Salinity Control Program (Program) has reduced the salinity of the river by over 90 milligrams per liter at Lake Havasu, the reservoir from which Metropolitan draws its Colorado River supply. Despite the Program's success, salt in the Colorado River continues to cause an estimated \$348 million in damages to water users each year. For example, high-salinity water damages the pipes of consumer and commercial equipment, increases water treatment costs, and reduces the yield of salt sensitive crops. Without the Program, damages to water users would be much higher, rising to approximately \$447 million by 2040, according to modeling by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Funding for the Program is derived jointly from appropriations and CRB-state-generated hydropower revenues. While the current funding model has served the Program well for decades, the recent drought has reduced hydropower revenue at a time when inflation is increasing project costs. As a result, the CRB states are unable to meet their cost-share requirements. H.R. 7872 was developed in conjunction with the Bureau of Reclamation and Natural Resources Conservation Service to address this problem. Without this fix, the salinity of the Colorado River would increase and cause additional economic damages over time.

Thank you for holding a hearing on H.R. 7872. Metropolitan supports this legislation and encourages Congress to enact it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adel Hagekhalil".

Adel Hagekhalil
General Manager