

---

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Rebecca Kimitch, MWD, (213) 217-6450, (202) 821-5253, rkimitch@mwdh2o.com  
Bronson Mack, SNWA, (702) 249-5518, bronson.mack@lvvwd.com

Dec. 9, 2020

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT, SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY  
COLLABORATE TO EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF RECYCLED WATER PROJECT  
**Supply augmentation project could improve Colorado River sustainability**

In a bold step toward a new kind of collaboration in the Colorado River Basin, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Southern Nevada Water Authority are partnering to explore development of a drought-proof water supply that could reduce reliance on the over-stressed river.

Under an [agreement](#) approved Tuesday by Metropolitan’s Board of Directors and SNWA’s Board of Directors last month, SNWA will contribute up to \$6 million for environmental planning of the [Regional Recycled Water Program](#), a proposed large-scale project to produce high quality water from purified wastewater.

Metropolitan has been developing the RRWP for more than a decade in partnership with the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. Last month, Metropolitan’s board [voted to initiate](#) environmental planning work for the project, at a cost of about \$30 million. SNWA’s contribution will help offset these costs.

“We’re exploring a new way of working together in the Colorado River Basin,” Metropolitan General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said. “We’re still in the planning and testing phase, but if this water recycling project is ultimately built, the initial investment by SNWA could lead to an interstate exchange of new locally produced water, increasing resiliency for both agencies.”

While the RRWP would provide a valuable drought-proof water supply within the region, the cost to develop the program would require a significant financial investment. Partnerships with agencies in California and beyond would reduce the impacts of that full financial burden on Metropolitan, Kightlinger explained, and help ensure that full build out of the RRWP would be achievable.

more . . . . .

“For more than two decades, our communities have jointly advocated for increased flexibility in how we use and share the Colorado River, and there is significant potential to further expand these efforts and help address water supply challenges through joint investments like the RRWP,” said SNWA General Manager John Entsminger.

If fully realized, the RRWP would produce up to 150 million gallons of water daily – the amount used by more than 500,000 homes – by taking cleaned wastewater and purifying it using innovative treatment processes. It would be one of the largest advanced water treatment plants in the world.

The project could help address an imbalance on the Colorado River, where demands from cities and farms outstrip supplies. This imbalance could increase as climate change is projected to reduce the river’s flows. The issue will be center stage when Colorado River Basin states begin renegotiating the river’s operating guidelines, set to expire in 2026. Coordination and collaboration among the basin states will be critical during these negotiations, including the potential of supply augmentation projects like the RRWP.

The funding agreement for environmental planning of the project does not obligate Metropolitan or SNWA to a long-term exchange, nor does it commit either agency to move forward with the program in the future. Any terms of a future exchange agreement or allocation would be developed at a later date through a separate agreement. If the agencies do not enter such an agreement, SNWA’s financial contributions to the RRWP’s environmental planning would be returned.

###

#### **About the Metropolitan Water District**

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that delivers water to 26 member agencies serving 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.

#### **About Southern Nevada Water Authority**

The SNWA is a wholesale water provider that manages water conservation, water quality and water resource issues in a sustainable, adaptive and responsible manner for Southern Nevada. The regional entity that consists of seven water and wastewater agencies that collectively serve more than 2.2 million residents through reliable, cost-effective systems. Visit [snwa.com](http://snwa.com) for more information.