

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER, OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE REMOTE OVERSIGHT HEARING**

October 20, 2021 11:00 a.m. ET

Oversight Hearing on “Colorado River Drought Conditions and Response Measures – Day Two.”

**Questions for the Record for Mr. Adel Hagekhalil, General Manager,
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California**

Question from Rep. Jim Costa (CA-16)

1. In the hearing, I asked about how repairing conveyance infrastructure in other basins outside of the Colorado River could benefit management of the Colorado River but also the State Water Project and Central Valley Project. Since we had limited time in the hearing, I would like to give you the opportunity to provide written responses to this question: Could you explain how improving or repairing conveyance infrastructure in basins outside of the Colorado River could help with regards to managing the Colorado River’s demands?

Metropolitan’s infrastructure connects two of the West’s critical watersheds: the Colorado and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta. Metropolitan’s system is truly integrated, if we have a more reliable California Aqueduct when water is more available in the Northern Sierras, we can decrease our demand on the Colorado River system and leave water in Lake Mead storage. Conversely, if State Water Project supplies are limited due to subsidence or other infrastructure issues, demands on the Colorado River system will increase and we will likely draw from Lake Mead. In addition, a reliable State Water Project supply provides enhanced water quality for blending with the region’s other water supply sources, including the Colorado River Aqueduct supply. This blending capability enhances water management for recycled water and groundwater storage within Metropolitan’s service area. Programs like the Regional Recycled Water Project benefit from the State Water Project supply by further bolstering the ability to shift water resources within the service area from the two watersheds—particularly during multi-year droughts as we are experiencing on the Sacramento-San Joaquin River watershed.

Infrastructure reliability is key to ensure we can continue to supply water to our communities. The California Aqueduct is in need of critical repairs. It is a 60-year-old system that has lost up to 20% capacity in some reaches. Climate scientists predict that increasing variability in precipitation this century will seriously challenge existing water storage, conveyance and flood control infrastructure. If California’s conveyance system is not repaired, it will limit opportunities to shift water resources within the Metropolitan service area, from these two watersheds. Metropolitan supports H.R. 2552, the Canal Conveyance Capacity Restoration Act, to provide federal funding to help repair California’s conveyance system.