

Colorado River Storage Project Act
Adopted July 19, 2005
Readopted April 2008
Revised and readopted July 2011
Revised and readopted April 2014
DRAFT #2, April 2017

Colorado River Storage Project Act

Colorado River Water Conservation District Policy Statements:

The Colorado River Water Conservation District (River District) supports the development of authorized and participating projects under the Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSPA) wherever economically, hydrologically, and environmentally feasible.

The River District will advocate for fulfillment of the purposes of the Upper Basin Fund, including its use to support construction and development of the authorized and participating projects under the CRSPA. However, in recognition of federal deficit concerns and other political realities, the River District will also pursue self-funded projects and other financing alternatives such as the 2010 Upper Basin Fund agreement. This agreement modified the surcharge paid by power distributors for the electricity from federal hydro power sites across the Upper Basin reducing CRSPA power rates and providing additional funds to address CRSPA-related projects.

Background & Discussion:

In 1956, the U.S. Congress passed the Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSPA). CRSPA authorized the construction of five large storage reservoirs: Powell ('Glen Canyon'), Flaming Gorge, Navajo, Aspinall ('Curecanti'), and Fontenelle, called the "Storage Projects." A primary purpose of these reservoirs is to regulate the Colorado River to allow the Upper Basin States to fully develop their compact entitlements while meeting 1922 Compact and Mexico Treaty requirements.

Additionally, CRSPA authorized the following "participating projects" in Colorado: Florida, Paonia, Pine River Extension, Silt, Smith Fork, Bostwick Park, Savery-Pot Hook, and Fruitland Mesa. Finally, the CRSPA directed completion of planning reports on the Juniper, Parshall, Troublesome, Rabbit Ears, Eagle Divide, San Miguel, West Divide, Bluestone, Battlement Mesa, Tomichi Creek, East River, Ohio Creek, Grand Mesa, Dallas Creek, Dolores, Fruit Growers Extension, Animas-LaPlata, and Yellow Jacket projects.

The CRSPA also established the Upper Basin Fund, which was to be funded with a portion of Colorado River derived federal power revenues. Excess revenues, after reimbursement for certain storage project costs, were to be apportioned among the Upper Basin states, with Colorado receiving 46%. These revenues, in turn, were to repay the federal treasury for the construction costs of participating projects.

In 1968, Congress, with the concurrence of the basin states, passed the Colorado River Basin

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Page 2 of 2

Project Act. Among other things, this Act authorized construction of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) but at a heavy price to Arizona. In order to secure political support, the CAP accepted the first and predominant burden of any Lower Basin shortage allocations. Additionally, one of then House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee Chairman Wayne Aspinall's condition for support of the Act was for the Secretary of the Interior to proceed "as nearly as practicable" with the construction of the projects authorized in the 1956 CRSPA, ensuring that construction of these projects would start no later than the date of first delivery of water from the CAP. Clearly, this has not occurred for all CRSPA projects.