



SB23-262

SHORT TITLE: Water Desalination Study and Report

LONG TITLE: Concerning requiring the Colorado Water Conservation Board to study the feasibility of water desalination as a potential contributing solution to the crisis of water scarcity in the Colorado River basin

SPONSORS: Sen. Priola/Representatives Ricks and Soper

COMMITTEES: Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

PURPOSE OF THE BILL: To obtain information on the feasibility of desalination in California and Mexico as a potential source of water for the Colorado River Basin

PROPOSERS OF THE BILL: N/A

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS: CWCB. Water users

BACKGROUND: The Colorado River Basin is experiencing a historic drought. Colorado water users are concerned that there may be a call on the Colorado River Compact reducing Colorado's share of the river. The proponents believe desalinization of water in the Lower Basin might be a partial solution to meeting water needs and alleviating future stress on Upper Basin users in Colorado.

How does the bill change current law? The law does not change. The bill directs CWCB to conduct a study.

Is this bill necessary this year? There is no deadline.

Does the bill affect the prior appropriations system? No

How is the bill implemented? The CWCB would perform a literature search to determine the feasibility of desalinization to provide future water for the Lower Colorado Basin. Issues to be studied include status of research on desalination, including quantification of certain costs of and benefits that could be realized from the construction and perpetual operation of one or more water desalination facilities in California or Mexico, or both. The CWCB would then present its report to legislative committees dealing with water, the Governor, and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Practical Considerations: If CWCB and the legislature determine that desalinization is feasible, how do they use this information? How can they use it in negotiations with the Lower Basin states?

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal note so we do not know how much the study might cost and who would pay for it.