

Comments to the U. S. House Subcommittee on Water and Power
Congressional Field Hearing – Managing Water for the Future
Greeley, Colorado
May 17, 2010

Let me begin by setting the stage for you.

Colorado is unique among all states in our nation in that it is a semi-arid, high altitude, headwaters state. Our forefathers learned long ago that in order to have year-around water supplies, they needed to capture the melting snow and store that water in reservoirs. In addition to the challenge of providing water for our citizens, Colorado also is obligated to send water to its downstream neighboring states.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board showed great foresight when it implemented a multi-year statewide water investigation study, SWSI, to quantify water availability and demands over the next 30 years. The results of that study indicates we have a shortage of over 300KAF on the South Platte River in Colorado. The shortage is due to population growth and a combination of ever increasing demands for water for municipal and industrial use, recreational use, endangered species needs, power generation and cyclical drought occurrences.

It is a proven fact that water we store in the South Platte River Basin is used, and re-used 7 times before it leaves the state line. The best answer to our water shortage needs is storage. If our forefathers hadn't provided water storage we wouldn't be meeting today in the 5th highest agriculture producing county in the nation!!!

We have several opportunities to meet the water supply challenges:

- The re-allocation of storage in Chattfield Reservoir - Corps of Engineers
- NISP (Northern Integrated Supply Project) – Glade and Galeton Reservoirs
- Windy Gap Firming - Northern's Chimney-Hollow Reservoir
- Halligan-Semen - FT. Collins/Greeley Project
- Gross Reservoir Enlargement – Denver Water

If these projects are not built, the only alternative will be to take water from agriculture. All of these projects going through the NEPA process have been delayed by the federal agencies.

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The federal government, through NRCS and FSA programs, has helped farmers and ranchers put in place conservation practices that have greatly improved their efficiency. Likewise, the Colorado Water Conservation Board has provided grants and loans to maximize the use of our limited water supplies.

I want to thank the members of the committee for authorizing the Endangered Species Recovery Program on the Platte River. That program ensures that all Colorado water users in the South Platte River Basin can continue to meet their water needs without Jeopardizing identified threatened or endangered species.

I'd also like to thank the committee for coming to Greeley, Colorado, for this Field Hearing today, and encourage you to expedite water storage projects that benefit all Colorado citizens.