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**The Honorable Lionel Rivera
Mayor, City of Colorado Springs**

**Testimony
Before the Committee on Resources
Subcommittee on Water and Power
United States House of Representatives**

**Oversight Field Hearing
Colorado: Options to increase water supply and improve efficiencies**

**Denver, Colorado
December 12, 2003**

**STATEMENT OF LIONEL RIVERA
MAYOR, CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

On behalf of the City of Colorado Springs, we would like to express our appreciation to the Subcommittee and you, Mr. Chairman, for taking the time to visit Colorado to discuss the very pressing water resource problems this State faces. As you know, Colorado sits at the top of all of its rivers and must share their flow with all of its neighbors. In addition, well over 70% of the total amount of water flowing in our rivers occurs in just three short months and comes from the melting snow in our mountains.

Colorado Springs is the second largest metropolitan area in the state of Colorado and the home to a number of our military installations, including the Air Force Academy, Fort Carson, NORAD, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base and the newly created Northern Command. All of these entities are served by Colorado Springs Utilities, an enterprise of the City of Colorado Springs.

Colorado Springs has a history of providing reliable, cost-effective utility services to our customers, including domestic, commercial and industrial water supplies, despite our location in a very arid part of the country.

We possess a very diverse water supply and delivery system, with over 75% of its water coming from the Colorado River Basin through transbasin diversion projects. The remainder is obtained from the Pikes Peak watershed or from the Arkansas River itself via the Fountain Valley Pipeline. The latter delivers our federal Fryingpan-Arkansas Project water.

However, the recent drought has stressed our water supply and delivery system. As we can all attest, it has forced all of us to reevaluate our water supplies and delivery infrastructure. Colorado Springs for several years has had an aggressive water conservation and demand side management program. During the drought our residents were able to reduce their consumption by 12% in 2002 and almost 20% this year.

I also want to highlight our reuse system. We have one of the largest wastewater reuse systems in the state and it has been in use since the 1960's. We have a direct reuse/non-potable water system at our Las Vegas Street Waste Water Treatment Plant that currently has a capacity of up to 6 mgd and we reuse about 3000 af of water per year on that system for irrigation. In addition, the water that is delivered to the Air Force Academy and some of the water to Fort Carson is also reused. We continually make improvements in those systems recognizing it is a valuable component of our current and future water supply. We are evaluating expanding our non-potable reuse delivery system.

Over the years, the cities and towns in this State, as well as the agricultural community have developed a wide and innovative series of projects to allow us to utilize the water, which we are entitled to consume under our compacts with our neighboring states. But the very nature of our water supply requires us to continue to improve and increase the amount of storage we have in order to carry the snowmelt run-off over from wet years to dry years and from the run-off months to the months with low streamflows.

Colorado Springs has been a leader in developing innovative water supplies relying upon a variety of sources to meet the needs of its rapidly growing population. Colorado Springs has appropriated and beneficially uses a portion of Colorado's Compact apportioned water on the Colorado River; Colorado Springs has developed and utilizes local water supplies originating in the snowfields on Pike's Peak and Colorado Springs has acquired water supplies on the Arkansas mainstem.

In 1990, we began a water planning process to determine our needs through the year 2040 based upon realistic growth projections. We found that though our existing water supply decrees may be adequate, there was a need for additional storage and delivery infrastructure. In 1996, the City adopted a plan of action which identified a number of approaches for meeting our future water demands, including water conservation, existing system improvements, and a new Southern Delivery System from Pueblo Reservoir, which is part of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project.

As part of this action plan, Colorado Springs Utilities approached the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District and indicated our need for additional storage. The Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District then conducted a water and storage needs assessment on behalf of all District members, including Colorado Springs. Colorado Springs Utilities fully supported this district-wide effort. That study confirmed the need for additional storage capacity in order to provide firm yield to municipal entities and it analyzed a wide range of alternatives to meet that demand, including storage of non-project water in project space and possible reservoir enlargements.

Both storage of non-project water and possible enlargement of Pueblo Reservoir and Turquoise Reservoir ranked very favorably in terms of cost, operational effectiveness and environmental/socio-economic factors. Colorado Springs has committed to pay for and receive approximately 50% of the additional storage capacity available through storage of non-project water and enlargements, totaling approximately 58,000 acre-feet of storage, a critical component in meeting our future water supply requirements. The enlargement study is also a critical first step in future water planning and development in the Arkansas River Valley.

Colorado Springs and the Southeast District were not alone in undertaking these planning efforts. Over 40 entities participated in the storage study process, including the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District, the City of Canon City, Arkansas River Outfitters Association, Colorado Division of Wildlife, City of Florence and the Pueblo Board of Water Works, the body responsible for providing water service to the City of Pueblo, our neighbor to the immediate south. We strongly supported and encouraged this regional and cooperative approach to water development.

Throughout the years Colorado Springs has worked in close cooperation with its neighbors in developing these water supplies. In particular, that cooperation has been most evident with the City of Pueblo's Board of Water Works and by that cooperation both Cities have been able to develop very reliable supplies for their citizens. We hope to see a continuation of the cooperation that has occurred for so many years and Colorado Springs is willing to accommodate concerns that the City of Pueblo has about flows for recreation through the City as well as efforts to protect a viable agricultural economy in the Arkansas Valley east of Pueblo.

I know the Committee is painfully aware that the opportunity to build new storage on the rivers and streams in Colorado has been significantly reduced by the competing pressures to protect the environment and insure that Native species and riparian conditions are not damaged or destroyed. As a result, we in Colorado are focusing on the improvement and expansion of existing storage facilities and the development of the means to better utilize the water already capable of being stored. Colorado Springs hopes and believes that all of the interests in Colorado support the principal of enlarging existing facilities and developing the means to better utilize the waters already stored.

We hope that when Congress returns from the holiday recess, Congressman Hefley joined by Congressman Beauprez and Congressman Tancredo will introduce legislation to permit the improved use of the storage facilities of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project including Pueblo Reservoir and Turquoise Reservoir. Colorado Springs supports that legislation which will allow a preferred storage option plan to be developed. That plan

will make additional storage space available to the cities and towns in the Arkansas Valley as well as to the agricultural community through more efficient use of existing storage space. In addition, we hope that Congress will authorize the investigation of enlarging one or both of those facilities to take advantage of additional supplies that can be developed.

This effort is consistent with the Bureau of Reclamation's Water 2025 effort to remove institutional barriers to allow storage of non-project water in project space. Optimizing the use of existing water supply infrastructure makes both business sense and environmental sense. We appreciate the Bureau of Reclamation's commitment to this effort, but we need Congress to act by codifying the Bureau's contracting authority on this project and to authorize the enlargement study.

For Colorado Springs to utilize the water supplies that it has developed already it is necessary to construct a pipeline from Pueblo Reservoir to the City. Although there are already pipelines from the Arkansas River near Buena Vista and from Pueblo Reservoir to the City, those pipelines no longer meet the needs of the City of Colorado Springs, and an additional infrastructure must be constructed. Colorado Springs along with the communities of Fountain and Security are pursuing a new pipeline, the Southern Delivery System from Pueblo Reservoir to the Pikes Peak region. Colorado Springs is negotiating in good faith with its neighbors and the Pueblo community to secure the construction of that pipeline and we are confident that with the long history of cooperation and good will between the communities that the development of the Colorado Springs Southern Delivery System will be a reality. We trust that Congress will be supportive of our efforts to insure that the Colorado Springs community has a stable and adequate water supply both now and in the future.

To sum up, the State of Colorado has adequate water for its present and future needs. If we are capable of managing the water supplies that are apportioned to us by our various Compacts, we will be able to meet the challenges of additional population and future droughts. However, that cannot occur without improved management of existing storage and the development of additional storage. The most efficient way to insure that additional storage can be developed is to enlarge existing facilities rather than confront the challenges of creating extensive new storage. We would respectfully request that the Committee give favorable consideration to any legislation proposed by Colorado to permit the more efficient utilization of existing storage or the enlargement of existing storage.

Again, we sincerely appreciate the Committee's willingness to take time from your incredibly busy schedule to hold a field hearing here in Colorado to hear from Colorado Springs and our friends and neighbors in this fine State concerning our desperate need for more storage to meet the challenges of the future.

Thank you very much.

Please direct additional questions of Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera to:

Andrew J. Colosimo
Government Affairs Manager
Colorado Springs Utilities
P.O. Box 1103, MC 950
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80947-0950
719-668-8005
719-668-8020 (fax)