



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

RESOLUTION

ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF NORTHWEST COLORADO (AGNC)
STATEMENT ON THE COLORADO WATER PLAN

WHEREAS, the collective Colorado River Basin is the “heart” of Colorado. The basin holds the headwaters of the Colorado River that form the main-stem of the river, some of the state’s most significant agriculture, the largest West Slope city and a large, expanding energy industry; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Basin is home to the most-visited national forest and much of Colorado’s recreation-based economy, including significant river-based recreation; and

WHEREAS, the collective Colorado Basin is the state’s major “donor” basin of water, providing between 450,000 to 600,000 acre-feet to farms and cities of eastern Colorado. Climate change, West Slope Gaps, undefined environmental and recreational needs and existing IPP’s will likely take approximately 140,000 acre feet of additional water, to be developed on the West Slope and Colorado Basin; and

WHEREAS, it has been rightfully stated that the past is no longer a guide to the future, and the old paradigms in water supply no longer work. The notion that increasing demands on the Front Range can always be met with a new supply from the Colorado River, or any other river, are no longer valid. We must develop a plan that is truly proactive, not reactive. We cannot afford to wait until crisis becomes the guide behind our decisions; and

WHEREAS, compliance with the Colorado River Compacts is a statewide responsibility because Colorado River users reside on both sides of the Continental Divide. Existing users should not bear the risk of compact curtailment caused by overdevelopment of the remaining increment of the Colorado River. Compact administration in the Colorado River Basin must be avoided. Impacts from a compact curtailment, or strategies to avoid a compact curtailment, must be borne equitably by all Colorado River users; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado River Basin Water Demand and Supply Study, a collaboration of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and the seven basin states, concluded that there would likely be an average shortfall of more than 3 million acre-feet in the entire seven-state region by 2060. The Colorado River has already reached a point where water supply is outstripped by water use; and

WHEREAS, the four western slope roundtables envision a collective Colorado River basin that is home to thriving communities benefiting from vibrant, healthy rivers and outstanding water quality that provides for all of the collective Colorado and western slope needs; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of the Colorado Water Plan that has been mandated by Governor Hickenlooper, the Colorado River Basin Roundtable adopted the following West Slope Principles:

1. Solutions in the Colorado Water Plan (CWP) to supply water for growth and development in one part of the state should not over-ride land use plans and regulations adopted by local governments in the part of the state from which water will be taken.
2. The CWP should protect and not threaten the economic, environmental, and social well-being of the West Slope.
3. The CWP should identify a process and requirements for each basin to exhaust available water supply within its own basin before planning diversions from another area of the state.
4. The CWP should outline mechanisms to mitigate the risk of potential Compact curtailment of the Colorado River. For example, the CWP should adopt low-risk legal and hydrologic assumptions related to Colorado's obligations under the Colorado River Compact and the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact in order to minimize the risk of curtailment on existing uses of Colorado River basin water.
5. The State should not assume a role as a proponent of a water project until the State regulatory process has been completed and the project has been agreed to by the impacted counties, conservancy districts and conservation districts in the area from which water would be diverted; and

WHEREAS, given the situation outlined by SWSI, the CWCB Climate Change Report and the Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study, it would be unrealistic to look for significant new supplies of water for the East Slope from the Colorado River as a primary source. Any further depletion of water from the Colorado River increases the risk of a compact curtailment; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Water Plan's Conceptual Framework and its Seven Principles allows for input by local decision makers and the participation by all affected parties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the elected County commissioners in Northwest Colorado stand united in supporting the draft Colorado Water Plan's Conceptual Framework for the future consideration of any more trans-mountain diversions or major changes in the operation of existing projects.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Colorado Water Plan's Conceptual Framework should be considered for application to Identified Projects and Proposals (IPP) and trans-mountain diversions (TMD).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Colorado Water Plan's Conceptual Framework provides an effective process for the participation and agreement by all of the affected and/or impacted county(s).

DATED this 19th day of August, 2015.