



August 19, 2014

John W Hickenlooper, Governor  
136 State Capitol  
Denver, CO 80203-1792

James Eklund, Director  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman St., Room 718  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Hickenlooper and Director Eklund,

On the Western Slope of Colorado, our water resources are not something we take for granted. We count on the Colorado River and its tributaries for our local economies, our food and our very way of life.

As you are aware, our water resources are being severely challenged. While sustained drought is taking a toll on the Colorado River, we continue to supply more than 400,000 acre feet (AF) per year to the Front Range while trying to keep up with our own needs for agriculture, industry, and our own drinking water. And recent predictions for future water levels in the Colorado River are bleak; The Department of Interior's 2012 Basin Study predicts a 9% reduction in water flows for the river in the coming decades.

But despite the drought, and predictions of long-term reductions in water levels, many Front Range interests are still hoping to take even more Western Slope water in the future.

In fact, a letter from Front Range water interests – including Denver Water, Aurora Water, Colorado Springs Utilities, the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, the Pueblo Board of Water Works, the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the Twin Lakes Reservoir and Canal Co. – to the CWCB this spring stated clearly their belief that the planning process “should begin with an assurance, and not simply a hope, that a new project involving Colorado River water will be a fundamental part of the package for meeting the state’s future water needs.” This would be too much of the same old story. For too long, the thirst of the Front Range has been at the sacrifice of Western Slope communities.

The Western Slope in Colorado has no more water to give. We, the undersigned western Colorado residents and leaders, strongly urge you to oppose any new trans-mountain diversion

that will take more water from the Western Slope of Colorado, as you develop Colorado's Water Plan.

The good news is that while we cannot just solve our state's future water needs by sending more water east, there are solutions to our long-term challenges. Through widely supported conservation, efficiency, and other measures, we already have the solutions for meeting all demands. But we need leaders from communities, businesses and governments on *both* sides of the Rocky Mountains to come together to implement these solutions.

Specifically, we urge you to develop a common-sense plan that:

- Prioritizes modernization and maximization of existing storage and delivery systems;
- Details investment in infrastructure for agricultural delivery and irrigation, on behalf of our strong agricultural economy and heritage; and
- Prioritizes municipal conservation and re-use.

In order to plan for our future, rural communities, businesses, and agricultural producers on the West Slope require reliable water resources and healthy rivers. Colorado's Water Plan is an opportunity to secure our long-term economies while promoting forward- thinking solutions that address water challenges on both sides of the Rocky Mountains.

We thank you in advance for your continued leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Mike Samson  
Chairman, AGNC  
Garfield County



Jeff Eskelson  
Vice Chairman, AGNC  
Rio Blanco County