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October 31, 2017
Ms. Rebecca Mitchell, Director
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources
1313 Sherman Street
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Director Mitchell,

On behalf of the members of the 2017 Water Resources Review Committee, I am pleased to submit to you and the CWCB comments related to Colorado Water Plan.

Storage continues to be one of the highest priorities to meet the future water needs in Colorado. Members from both the east slope and the west slope find it unacceptable that water leaves this state in amounts over and above our compact obligations. The pressure to transfer water from agriculture to municipal use as well as through transbasin diversions can be reduced by assuring that the water Colorado is entitled to remains in Colorado for the use of its citizens.

Conservation also is a vital part of meeting Colorado's future water needs. The committee recognizes that conservation for municipal users has different impacts than agriculture users. Agriculture has been the leaders in conservation for decades by changing irrigation techniques and have worked to manage a reduced amount of return flows to the river as a consequence of those changes. Those impacts are not as relevant in conservation scenarios in a municipal setting. In either case, if there is no place to store the water that has been conserved, conservation will do nothing to address our future water needs.

The committee also stresses the importance of agriculture and the concern that Colorado needs to find ways to protect agriculture and agriculture water from being moved to municipal use. Although Alternative Transfer Methods are part of the discussion, those methods only slow the process of water leaving agriculture and don't address the issue of meeting ALL of Colorado's water needs. Again, the lack of water storage seems to be a major factor in why the number of irrigated agriculture acres continues to decrease.

Thank you for your consideration of the Water Resources Review Committee comments.

Sincerely,

Senator Jerry Sonnenberg
Chairman, Water Resources Review Committee