



Colorado Water Congress

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THE LEADING VOICE OF COLORADO'S WATER COMMUNITY

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Democratic Leader
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-0100

June 18, 2017

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi;

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the members of the Colorado Water Congress (CWC), we are writing in support of H.R. 1654, the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act. The CWC is a membership organization consisting of 400 + members, serving as the principal voice of Colorado's water community. The CWC consists of members representing the municipal, agricultural, industrial, commercial, recreation, and environmental sectors. As an organization, we have listed "streamlining the permitting process" as a Federal priority, year after year. We thank Rep. McClintock for sponsoring this vital piece of legislation.

CWC supports the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act because it works to address the increasingly complex, time consuming and costly federal permitting process. The economic viability of the state of Colorado is dependent on a safe and reliable water supply. In recent years the ability of water managers to meet growth demand and create additional water storage has become more challenging.

As an example, Northern Water's Windy Gap Firming Project (WGFP) recently received final 404 Clean Water Act Permit approval from the Army Corps for the development of Chimney Hollow Reservoir. The project's formal environmental permitting process began in October 2003, although the initial development of the WGFP began in the mid-1990s. Final design of Chimney Hollow Reservoir is underway and construction is slated to begin in 2019. Water storage could occur by 2021 or 2022.

WGFP is anticipated to cost \$400 million, including over \$100 million in inflation over the course of fifteen years. Shorter permitting processes could help avoid large inflation adjustments for projects like these in the future, and make it easier to expand and build new reservoirs to address Colorado's potential future water shortage issues.

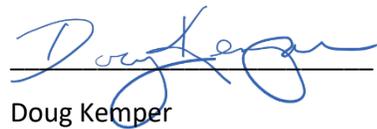
The Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act would create a sensible framework that improves permitting coordination between federal agencies. It establishes the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) as the 'one-stop-shop' for permitting associated with the construction of all new or expanded surface storage facilities developed on lands managed by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. Reclamation will identify, and subsequently notify, any federal agency

that may have jurisdiction over a required review. Agencies will be identified from submitted applications for qualifying projects, and be designated as a “cooperating agency,” unless otherwise specified.

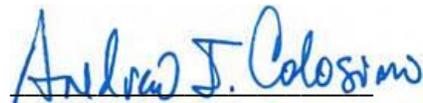
The Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act would also improve the permitting processes by setting reasonable timelines and encouraging data sharing between agencies. Furthermore, the bill authorizes a transparent process for Reclamation to accept and disburse funds from non-federal public entities to help expedite the permitting process.

On behalf of CWC’s members, we appreciate your attention to the critical water supply issues facing our nation and the state of Colorado. CWC stands ready and willing to assist the members of this committee in any way possible with this legislation moving forward, and urges a ‘yes’ vote on H.R. 1654.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Kemper". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Doug Kemper
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Colosimo". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Andy Colosimo
Federal Affairs Committee Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Treese". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Chris Treese
Federal Affairs Committee Vice Chair