

Water Protection Priorities for Colorado

“Every conversation about water ought to begin with conservation.” Those were the words of Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper in his 2013 State of the State Address. In May 2013, Governor Hickenlooper issued an executive order directing the Colorado Water Conservation Board to develop a “State Water Plan” that would create a roadmap for water use.



For many years, Colorado cities and towns have pulled water from the state’s rivers to meet growing demand. Colorado’s rivers cannot sustain this demand on a long-term basis. Water conservation and healthy river flows should be across the board priorities in Colorado. As little as a 1% reduction per year in water use across Colo-

rado could conserve enough water to serve more than 1.8 million Colorado families. At a minimum, this should be adopted as a goal through 2050.

River basins that begin in Colorado serve more than 100 million Americans across the Southwest, Great Plains, and Pacific Coast — from Texas to Kansas to California. Healthy river flows are not only vital to these states as a source of drinking water, but also as the lifeblood for Colorado’s \$9 billion recreation economy. Healthy flows means finding ways to incentivize water conservation, avoid new large-scale transmountain diversion projects, and ensure that the water is fishable, swimmable, and drinkable.

In June, the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment are set to issue a second draft of the Colorado Water Plan. State lawmakers, including the Governor, need to hear from Colorado citizens about the need to protect and conserve Colorado water.

Please join Clean Water Action in calling on Governor Hickenlooper, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board to set a high-bar for the state water plan when it comes to planning for the future of Colorado’s water, [insert ACTION URL here]



FRACKING FRONTLINES:

Oil & Gas Development's Community Impacts

Earlier this year, Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund launched www.FrackingFrontlines.com to make sure policy makers and lawmakers across Colorado saw the real impacts of lenient regulation of oil and gas development across Colorado. The website profiles Coloradans and their communities, living near oil and gas development, making the case for stronger regulations to protect water, health and community safety.

In March, the Colorado Oil and Gas Task Force, including environmentalists, community members, local elected officials and industry representatives, concluded a series of meetings on the industry's impacts on communities and natural resources. The resulting recommendations ended up being far weaker than Clean Water Action had hoped, reflecting the need for at least 14 of 21 possible votes by diverse Task Force interests, including industry representatives.

The record of Task Force proceedings did, however, include additional helpful recommendations for protect-

ing water and health. For example, a majority of Task Force representatives favored recommending a health impact study, but the proposal did not garner the required two-thirds support. Clean Water Action's active role in the process, elevating the voices of Colorado citizens with state lawmakers and Gov. Hickenlooper

has opened new avenues for dialogue on solutions.

Clean Water Action will continue working to implement key Task Force recommendations while pushing for stronger reforms, including stronger air and water quality monitoring and a greater role for community input in development decisions. Protecting Denver's watershed from oil

and gas development remains an ongoing priority.

While the Task Force process was underway, Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund mobilized more than 2,500 local comments, turned out hundreds of community leaders and activists for public comments at Task Force Meetings — raising the profile of people directly affected by oil and gas development.

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Natural gas rig in the Piceance Basin in Colorado

2014 Legislative Report

A deeply divided Colorado Legislature adjourned on May 6. The anti-environment State Senate majority and narrowly pro-environment House created a ground zero for radical anti-environment legislation.

Extreme measures introduced in 2016 would have undermined compliance with the Clean Power Plan and extended state eminent domain claims over federal lands in Colorado. Clean Water Action and

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allies helped to block bills to undo the state's renewable energy standard and climate change legislation.

Unfortunately, measures also failed that would have increased energy efficiency for affordable housing

and new buildings and allowed rain barrel use for municipal water savings. Colorado is the only remaining state where rain barrel use is illegal. The State Senate's anti-environment majority also stymied other progress on climate change, renewable energy and water conservation.

Turning the Focus to Municipal Elections



Kristin Stephens

This spring, Clean Water Action endorsed Kristin Stephens, Carl Wangsvick, and Nancy Tellez for the Fort Collins City Council, and Ward Luthi for Mayor of Fort Collins.

Fort Collins has been a stronghold of environmental activism and sustainability for many years. In 2013, the

City of Fort Collins passed a ban on fracking within the city. In 2014, Fort Collins adopted a Climate Change Action Plan, one of the nation's strongest, putting the city on track to be 80% reliant on renewable energy by 2020.

The endorsed candidates received mail and voter turnout support from Clean Water Action, and helped secure a City Council win for Kristin Stephens.

HISTORIC VICTORY TO PROTECT OUR WATER

AFTER TEN YEARS, the US Environmental Protection Agency has restored protection under the Clean Water Act to 60% of our stream miles and to millions of acres of wetlands. These are streams and wetlands that used to be protected from pollution and destruction, but lost that protection about ten years ago. For thirty years, these streams and wetlands were protected; but overnight, they were put at risk.



The change wasn't based on science. The science is clear. Small streams and so-called isolated wetlands are fundamental parts of our overall watersheds. Even small kids understand that small streams are connected to the bigger ones. And thousands of scientific studies have confirmed the outsized impact these little streams have on water quality and quantity in our overall watershed.

These changes weren't little things either. Overnight, the sources of drinking water for 1 in 3 Americans were put at risk. Overnight, tens of thousands of jobs in outdoor related businesses like fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, boating and swimming were put at risk. Other jobs in fields from clean tech to craft brewing were put at risk as well.

The American public understands the importance of protecting our water. In a recent poll, 80% said they supported the Clean Water rule. And over the past ten years, at least a million of us have written or called or emailed EPA or our elected official to tell them it was time to restore protection to all of America's waters.

Thank you to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and President Obama for making this happen. And thank you to all the Clean Water Action members over the past ten years who helped make this happen. The new Clean Water rule is great news for our water and our communities.

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