

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

FROM: Tom Browning, Section Chief
Watershed Protection & Flood Mitigation

James Martin
DNR Executive Director

DATE: January 14, 2010

Jennifer L. Gimbel
CWCB Director

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 8, January 26-27, 2010**
Watershed Protection & Flood Mitigation Section-
Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project – CWCB Resolution of Support

Dan McAuliffe
CWCB Deputy Director

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached CWCB resolution supporting the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project (Project) within the South Platte River Basin.

Background

Population growth along the Front Range continues to create demand for water supply in the South Platte River Basin for beneficial use to meet municipal & industrial (M&I) needs as well as existing agricultural demands. Furthermore, non-consumptive water needs for the preservation and enhancement of environmental and recreational opportunities are of high importance to many of the Project stakeholders.

In order to help local entities meet their current and future water supply needs along the Front Range, the CWCB has contracted with the Omaha District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to investigate the feasibility of reallocating existing storage space within Chatfield Reservoir (situated at the confluence of Plum Creek and the South Platte River in the southern portion of the Denver Metro area). The contract, known as a Feasibility Cost Share Agreement (FCSA), outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Corps and the CWCB pertaining to a Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FR/EIS) for the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project (Project).

The fundamental scope of the Project is to evaluate the feasibility of converting flood control storage space in Chatfield Reservoir, owned by the Corps, into water supply storage space. The maximum volume for the reallocation analysis has been set at 20,600 acre-feet based on an Antecedent Flood Study model that was approved by the Corps. The FR/EIS effort is analyzing a 7,700 acre-foot storage reallocation alternative as well as two “no action” alternatives for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). From a flood control perspective, the Corps has determined that through updated watershed modeling, antecedent flood criteria,

and modified reservoir operations during conditions of flooding, water supply storage space can be made available without adversely impacting the existing flood protection function of the facility.

An original consortium of 16 Water Users (now 15) signed Letters of Commitment with the CWCB pledging cost-share funding assistance and legitimate interest in potentially receiving predetermined amounts of the reallocated storage space within the reservoir. Each water user entity would be responsible for their share of the total Project cost pursuant to a future contract between the CWCB and the Corps authorizing use of the space for water supply purposes.

The order of magnitude for total cost of the project is \$125 million, which includes the cost of the storage space (payment to the Federal Treasury for use of the existing facility), cost of environmental mitigation, and cost of recreation mitigation. In addition, physical delivery infrastructure costs may be needed by certain Water Users on a case-by-case basis. Long-term annual O&M costs would also be required by all Water Users as part of the Project.

Chatfield Reservoir is home to one of the most highly utilized State recreational areas in Colorado and is operated by State Parks. Existing facilities around the reservoir would need to be relocated or retrofitted to account for increased and fluctuating water surface elevations (the conservation pool would be raised by 12 feet, from elevation 5,432' to 5,444' during normal operations). Significant environmental mitigation will also be necessary to address any impacts resulting from the Project and as prescribed by NEPA. Despite the studied impacts, the Project has enormous benefits including the fact that it's an in-basin, cooperative, and regional solution to current water supply needs and projected shortages identified by Water Users and by SWSI for the South Platte basin.

Project Status

The Project study team is in the midst of completing the FR/EIS and hopes to receive a Record of Decision (ROD) from the Assistant Secretary of the Army during early 2011. Regular coordination and progress meetings are well attended, and project participants have been steadfast in their determination to achieve a successful outcome. Following the issuance of a ROD, implementation actions and changes to the reservoir operating manual will need to be completed before water can be stored in the reallocated space.

Project Support

The Project enjoys broad support from a strong coalition of water supply interests as well as from all nine members of Colorado's Congressional Delegation. Additionally, a letter of support from Governor Ritter has been provided, as well as a bi-partisan Colorado Senate Joint Resolution (SJR07-019) supporting the Project. The South Platte and Metro Roundtables support the Project, and both have contributed funds from their respective WSRA basin accounts to assist with study tasks.

The CWCB Board has been particularly instrumental over the long-term course of the FR/EIS efforts by supporting the Project and by approving several non-reimbursable funding requests during past Board meetings. CWCB funding has been largely used as part of the 50/50 cost-share requirement with the Corps.

CWCB Resolution – January 2010
In Support of the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project

WHEREAS, The CWCB has contracted with the Omaha District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to investigate the feasibility of reallocating existing storage space within Chatfield Reservoir through a contract known as the Feasibility Cost Share Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Feasibility Cost Share Agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Corps and the CWCB pertaining to a Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project (Project); and

WHEREAS, the fundamental scope of the Project is to evaluate the feasibility of converting up to 20,600 acre-feet of existing flood control storage space in the federal facility into water supply storage space (joint conservation pool) for municipal, industrial, agricultural, and other beneficial uses; and

WHEREAS, the Corps has determined that through updated watershed modeling, antecedent flood criteria, and administrative operations of the reservoir during conditions of flooding, water supply storage space can be made available without adversely impacting the existing flood protection function of the facility; and

WHEREAS, A consortium of 15 Water Users signed Letters of Commitment with the CWCB pledging cost-share funding assistance and notice of interest in potentially receiving pre-determined portions of the reallocated storage space within the reservoir; and

WHEREAS, each of the 15 water users would be financially responsible for their portion of the total cost of the reallocated space resulting from the Project and pursuant to a future contract between the CWCB and the Corps; and

WHEREAS, the Project has broad support from a strong coalition of water supply and environmental interests as well as from a multitude of elected officials, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders throughout Colorado.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Colorado Water Conservation Board supports the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project, which could provide additional raw water supply storage volume within the South Platte River Basin by reallocating up to 20,600 acre-feet of reservoir storage space within the existing federal facility.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Colorado Water Conservation Board strongly encourages the Federal Government to work expeditiously in completing and approving the necessary studies and documents in order to obtain a successful Record of Decision that will allow the Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project to move forward in a timely manner.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by a majority vote of the members of the Colorado Water Conservation Board in regular session assembled at Denver, Colorado, on the 26th day of January, 2010, at which a quorum was present.

Jennifer L. Gimbel, CWCB Director