

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Tim Feehan, Assistant Director

DATE: January 16, 2013

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item 17c, January 28-29, 2013 Board Meeting
South Platte Groundwater Funding – 2013 Projects Bill**

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board request the General Assembly to appropriate up to \$250,000 in the 2013 Projects Bill, from the Construction Fund, for the board to collect and analyze data, perform updates, make enhancements to and perform model runs with the South Platte decision support system (SPDSS), to install and monitor various devices, conduct public outreach, and other efforts as necessary to assist in determining the cause and possible remediation of high ground water levels in the South Platte River Basin.

Background

At the November 2011 Board Meeting the Board directed staff to request the General Assembly to appropriate up to \$500,000 in the 2012 Projects Bill to collect and analyze data, update the and make enhancements to the SPDSS groundwater model and to perform two test pilot project in the Sterling and Gilcrest areas, to assist in determining the cause and possible remediation to high ground water levels in the South Platte River Basin. Additionally the General Assembly approved House Bill 1278 that directed the Colorado Water Institute (CWI) to collect and analyze existing groundwater data within the South Platte Basin to provide an independent review of what might contributing to high ground water levels. CWI's efforts related to HB 1278 are being funded out of the Construction Fund at an estimated total cost of \$907,000.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), Division of Water Resources (DWR) DWR, and CWI have been coordinating efforts to ensure that all pertinent information that is being collected and monitored is available for review and use by all interested parties. DWR has completed installing all needed monitoring devices in the Sterling area and is currently collecting data. Over the next few months DWR will be working with CWCB and CWI to determine the level of instrumentation needed in the Gilcrest area. In regard to the SPDSS model, CWCB is currently in the procurement phase of having the model updated with data to 2011.

Discussion

Staff anticipates that the \$500,000 appropriated under the 2012 Projects Bill will be fully expended by July 1, 2014. The \$250,000 requested under the 2013 Projects Bill would provide for several related efforts. It would allow staff to provide funding for GPS data collection at various well sites, which is critical in developing a reliable elevation platform to relate groundwater levels to. This would be a joint effort between CWCB and United States Geological Survey (USGS). Additionally, it is anticipated that some level of modeling may be required, which may require refinements to the current SPDSS model. This could potentially be useful to CWI in their efforts as well. It is also anticipated that additional monitoring devices, data collection, and part-time staffing will be required to provide the necessary data and support as things develop.

The current and proposed funding requests will provide long term benefit to SPDSS and DWR in monitoring and understanding the fluctuation of ground water levels in the South Platte Basin on many levels.