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Colorado Water  
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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## 2017 Water Projects Bill Introduced to Advance the Colorado Water Plan

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Each year, the General Assembly authorizes water project grants and loans in the annual Water Projects Bill. In the past, these loans and grants have been used to finance engineering and construction costs for more than 525 locally-supported water projects. The 2017 Projects Bill was introduced in the Colorado House of Representatives on March 9th, 2017, and continues this tradition by providing \$164 million for programs and projects, including funding to advance satellite monitoring, flood control programs, alternate transfer mechanisms, water loss control initiatives, large water project loans, and numerous other efforts to address Colorado's existing and future water needs.

A key component of the 2017 Projects Bill is \$25 million to support the implementation of Colorado's Water Plan. This includes \$10 million to supplement the Water Supply Reserve Fund to continue support for projects authorized by the nine Basin Roundtables and \$5 million to develop stream management plans through the Watershed Restoration Program. Finally, \$10 million will support other critical components of Colorado's Water Plan, including grants to 1) address the water supply and demand gap; 2) advance long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning; 3) develop additional water storage; 4) conduct water education, outreach, and innovation efforts; 5) provide technical assistance and project grants for agriculture; 6) support watershed health, environment, and recreation; and 7) complete an update to the statewide water supply initiative (SWSI).

In addition, the 2017 Projects Bill provides \$100 million in loans for large water storage projects. This includes a \$90 million loan for the Windy Gap Project that will improve the reliability of water supplies for 13 municipal participants within the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District - Municipal Subdistrict, and a \$10 million loan for the Rio Grande Reservoir rehabilitation portion of the Rio Grande Cooperative Project. The bill also creates a \$30 million Loan Guarantee Fund to support regional water projects by homogenizing project participants' credit ratings, and therefore, lowering lending rates on the open market.

The 2017 Water Projects Bill is dependent upon approval from the legislature.