



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board

FROM: Russ Sands, Section Chief
Water Supply Planning Section

DATE: November 16-17, 2022 Board Meeting

ITEM: 15b. 2023 Projects Bill - Non-Reimbursable Project Investments
(2) 2023 Water Plan Action Advancement

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve \$2,000,000 in funding from the Construction Fund for the 2023 Water Plan Action Advancement efforts in the 2023 Projects Bill.

Introduction

The 2023 Colorado Water Plan (Water Plan) is set for approval in January of 2023. Once that Plan is finalized, the CWCB needs to begin implementing actions in the Water Plan. This is done in a variety of ways including funding partner actions (e.g. grants; loans) and advancing agency actions CWCB has committed to. The latter requires designated funding for initial steps that either support or directly advance actions. Some agency actions are long-term (2033 Water Plan), mid-term (2028 Technical Update), however there are several actions and supportive initiatives that need to begin advancing quickly to build toward subsequent actions that relate to those deliverables.

CWCB staff requests \$2 million dollars of non-reimbursable project funds to advance actions and related work (i.e. developing tools, convening stakeholder groups, research, data analysis) that are described in the 2023 Colorado Water Plan. This funding will advance actions within each action area of the Water Plan with some flexibility to allow for the budget to shift across action areas should staff needs or board operations refine funding priorities. While these dollars may not lead to completion of one or more actions, this funding offers as an initial investment towards action advancement - recognizing that some actions may require funding for underlying work that provides a first step toward completion. These actions are described in detail in the 2023 Colorado Water Plan's Chapter 6 and summarized below.

Discussion

This non-reimbursable project investment fund request includes funds identified broadly for Water Plan actions that will advance work in each of the four Action Areas as described in Chapter 6 of the 2023 Colorado Water Plan. Fund allocations are evenly spread among the action areas of the plan with the intent that they could be applied and distributed to prioritized Water Plan actions or support work as needed.



Vibrant Communities:**Municipal Water Conservation Standards Evaluation (\$500,000)**

To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Vibrant Communities monies will be used to provide the initial funding to advance water loss tracking, turf replacement discussions, and support the development of benchmarks (supporting Actions 1.1, 1.3 and 1.7). Work would include convening technical workgroups that explore the feasibility of creating statewide standards for outdoor water use, water loss and related issues around municipal water conservation.

Robust Agriculture:**Economic Analysis of Agricultural Opportunities (\$500,000)**

To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Robust Agriculture, monies will be used to advance economic evaluations of agriculture that can inform local government decision-making and expand Collaborative Water Sharing Agreements (supporting actions 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6). As part of this work, research will be conducted to ascertain the impacts of agriculture on rural vitality, including economic outputs, jobs, tax revenue, quality of life, and impact of agriculture on environmental and recreational resources.

Thriving Watersheds:**Watershed Planning Platform (\$500,000)**

To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Thriving Watersheds the CWCB will work with partner agencies to develop a common watershed planning platform and evaluate how research around forest health can inform scenario planning modeling (supporting actions 3.4 and 3.8). This work can help state agencies collect research, warehouse data, tools and information that will lead to the creation of secondary development of scenarios and an online platform for watershed planning. The latter will provide the public with a central landing page for helping them plan for watershed/stream work and supports the evaluation of local priorities by providing and, where possible, integrating multiple mapping efforts into a single watershed hub for planning information.

Resilient Planning:**Drought Ready Communities Framework (\$500,000)**

To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Resilient Planning (supporting action 4.10), the CWCB will create tools that enhance Colorado's drought resilience by developing a Drought Ready Communities framework that helps communities better plan for localized drought impacts. This includes creating a statewide susceptibility analysis that evaluates drought risk to life, safety, property, infrastructure, and water supplies at a county scale. It also includes a Drought Ready Communities framework that can guide local community discussions on how to use available tools to help communities prioritize drought planning and risk-mitigating projects.



CWCB staff requests \$2 million dollars of non-reimbursable project funds to advance actions and related work (i.e. developing tools, convening stakeholder groups, research, data analysis) that are described in the 2023 Colorado Water Plan (Water Plan). This funding will advance actions within each action area of the Water Plan with flexibility to allow for the budget to shift across action areas should staff needs or board operations refine funding priorities. Funds may not lead to completion of the noted actions, however, this funding offers as an initial investment towards their advancement - recognizing that some actions require funding for underlying work. These actions are described in detail in the 2023 Colorado Water Plan’s Chapter 6 and summarized below.

P R O J E C T D E T A I L S	
<i>Project Cost:</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>NRI Funding Request:</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>Funding Source:</i>	<i>Construction Fund</i>
<i>Project Type:</i>	Water Plan Actions
<i>Type of Grantee:</i>	State Agency

L O C A T I O N	
<i>Benefits:</i>	<i>Statewide</i>
<i>Water Source:</i>	Various
<i>Drainage Basin:</i>	All Basins

Action Area	Water Plan Action Advancement Opportunities	Costs
Vibrant Cities	To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Vibrant Communities (Actions 1.1, 1.3 and 1.7), monies will be used to provide the initial funding this project will to advance water loss tracking, turf replacement discussions, and support the development of benchmarks (supporting Actions 1.1, 1.3 and 1.7).	\$500,000
Robust Agriculture	To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Robust Agriculture, monies will be used to advance economic evaluations of agriculture that can inform local government decision-making and expand Collaborative Water Sharing Agreements (supporting actions 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6).	\$500,000
Thriving Watersheds	To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Thriving Watersheds the CWCB will work with partner agencies to develop a common watershed planning platform and evaluate how research around forest health can inform scenario planning modeling (supporting actions 3.4 and 3.8).	\$500,000
Resilient Planning	To support Colorado Water Plan implementation in the area of Resilient Planning (supporting action 4.10), the CWCB will create tools that enhance Colorado’s drought resilience by developing a Drought Ready Communities framework that helps communities better plan for localized drought impacts.	\$500,000