



**COLORADO**

**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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**TO:** Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

**FROM:** Russ Sands, Section Chief  
Kat Weismiller, Deputy Section Chief  
Water Supply Planning Section

**DATE:** November 15-16, 2023 Board Meeting

**AGENDA ITEM:** 17b. 2024 Projects Bill - Non-Reimbursable Project Investments - Presentations  
(1) Drought Resilience Investment

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### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve \$4,000,000 in funding for the Drought Resilience Investment from the Construction Fund for inclusion in the 2024 Projects Bill.

### Description/Scope of Work

Colorado's recent improvements in snowpack and precipitation come amidst a long-term trend toward warming and greater aridity. Funding and execution of meaningful drought mitigation initiatives are critical, as noted in the 2023 Colorado Water Plan (Water Plan). This \$4M funding investment will advance projects within and complimentary to the Water Plan that support drought planning, practical implementation of drought mitigation techniques, education, guidance and training.

Funding between these tasks may shift as needed to best facilitate the thoughtful execution of these tasks as estimated by similar efforts, past CWCB funding needs and exploratory scoping. Details follow:

- **Drought Resilience Workshops** - Continuing the Growing Water Smart initiative that has already reached over half the population in Colorado is a strong investment in drought resilience. Water conservation and land use planning have a powerful potential to mitigate the worst impacts of future droughts. This investment will continue the existing statewide Growing Water Smart training (101 level training), and it will add pilot workshops for three regional communities on Drought-Ready Communities (201 level training) that supports Action 4.10 of the Colorado Water Plan, the Drought Resilience Toolkit concept, to specifically look at drought susceptibility and develop local drought mitigation strategies. It also adds a final workshop (301 level training) for regional officials and elected officials to identify their top drought mitigation concerns and plans to develop drought mitigation strategies/projects that can build regional drought resilience and water security.
  - Estimated Project Time: 2024-2027
  - Estimated Project Cost: \$1,500,000
- **Water Plan Outreach Campaign** - With the launch of the Water Plan, Agency Action 4.3 calls for development of a statewide Water Plan outreach campaign. This initial infusion of funds will seek to develop branded marketing campaign materials that can be used to communicate key water challenges and potential solutions tied to the Water Plan. This initial investment will be used to learn from past campaigns and leverage partnerships to make funding extend farther; developing outreach materials that connect people to water, water conservation and



concepts in the Water Plan. The deliverables will explore potential for co-branding for use by partner agencies, organizations, local municipalities and other partners. Survey work to optimize campaign effectiveness including around marketing, focus groups, deliverables, strategies and media purchases are all associated with this effort which will likely require coalition building to advance.

- Estimated Project Time: 2025-2027
  - Estimated Project Cost: \$1,000,000
- **Water Loss Prevention and Validator Training** - Continuing to refine water loss in cities is a critical component to helping cities be more efficient, and it is described in Action 1.3 of the Colorado Water Plan. The CWCB has funded two past investments in this area and intends to use this funding to continue those efforts - a key need given utility staffing turn over, new staff training needs and a need to expand training to help water utilities identify and curb water loss. Beyond the ongoing workshops, this funding will help support an initial round of third-party water loss audit validation certification training, allowing water utilities to verify and refine their water loss numbers. This process will be supported by CWCB's previous and ongoing work to improve the HB 1051 reporting requirements that support enhanced municipal water loss reporting and tracking.
  - Estimated Project Time: 2024-2028
  - Estimated Project Cost: \$750,000
- **Adaptive and Critical Drought Projects for Colorado** - There are key projects across each of the major areas of the Water Plan that are making a difference for Colorado. From new crops that are showing substantial yields/water savings, to One Water planning in cities, to stream restoration efforts that have reduced flooding risks. These projects embody the spirit of the Water Plan, and their leadership illuminates a path to meeting the state's water needs. As such, they should be better showcased and referenced to spur similar projects and thinking. This report would feature up to 20 diverse projects and serve as a progress report on the Water Plan. It would support multiple agency actions within the Water Plan including Action 4.10, and Action 2.7. Particular emphasis will be aimed at projects/project types that are truly identifying ways Colorado can adapt to changes in climate and create multiple benefits to local communities and the state.
  - Estimated Project Time: 2024-2025
  - Estimated Project Cost: \$150,000
- **Storage Analysis, Opportunities and Alternatives** - Both drought and flood have implications for storage which need to be considered in future planning. This analysis will refine Colorado's understanding of storage potential, work to identify and outline storage options, differentiate surface and ground water storage opportunities, and provide a practical understanding of what challenges, opportunities, and alternatives to storage that must be considered alongside storage planning. This report will support Action 1.9 of the Colorado Water Plan. This will also serve to refine estimates outlined in the 2019 Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan. Funding may also support understanding new thinking on best practices for linking projects to local, state and federal funding opportunities (and ways creative funding models have built success).
  - Estimated Project Time: 2024-2027
  - Estimated Project Cost: \$350,000
- **Water Conservation Handbook** - A conservation-first approach to growth is needed to advance Colorado communities, but the definition of a "water saving community," including realistic conservation goals, areas of focus, and potential water-use reduction metrics are less clear. This effort would compile the latest thinking and water conservation potential for new construction and retrofits through indoor and outdoor savings. It will also help establish

metrics for conservation tailored to various community starting points and it will be critical to providing cities with targets for where to make the best investments in water savings and tools to get them there fastest. This task would support Action 1.1 of the Colorado Water Plan.

- Estimated Project Time: 2024-2026
- Estimated Project Cost: \$250,000

***Total Cost: \$4,000,000***



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Focus areas include:

P R O J E C T D E T A I L S	
Project Cost:	\$4,000,000
NRI Funding Request:	\$4,000,000
Funding Source:	Construction Fund
Project Type:	Water Plan Implementation
Type of Grantee:	State Agency

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

Focus Areas/Timeline	Description	Est. Cost
Drought Resilience Workshops 2024-2027	Continuing the Growing Water Smart initiative that has already reached over half the population in Colorado is a strong investment in drought resilience. This investment will continue the existing statewide Growing Water Smart training and it will add pilot workshops for three regional communities on Drought-Ready Communities that supports Action 4.10 of the Colorado Water Plan, the Drought Resilience Toolkit concept.	\$1,500,000
Water Plan Outreach Campaign 2025-2027	With the launch of the Water Plan, Agency Action 4.3 calls for development of a statewide Water Plan outreach campaign. This initial infusion of funds will seek to develop branded marketing campaign materials that can be used to communicate key water challenges and potential solutions tied to the Water Plan.	\$1,000,000
Water Loss Prevention and Validator Training 2024-2028	Continuing to refine water loss in cities is a critical component to helping cities be more efficient, and it is described in Action 1.3 of the Colorado Water Plan. The CWCB has funded two past investments in this area and intends to use this funding to continue those efforts.	\$750,000
Adaptive and Critical Drought Projects for Colorado 2024-2025	There are key projects across each of the major areas of the Water Plan that are making a difference for Colorado. From new crops that are showing substantial yields/water savings, to One Water planning in cities, to stream restoration efforts that have reduced flooding risks. This report will showcase projects/project types that are identifying multi-benefit ways Colorado can adapt to changes in climate. This supports multiple agency actions including Action 4.10, and Action 2.7.	\$150,000
Storage Analysis, Opportunities and Alternatives 2024-2027	Both drought and flood have implications for storage which need to be considered in future planning. This analysis will refine Colorado's understanding of storage potential, work to identify and outline storage options, differentiate surface and groundwater storage opportunities, and provide a practical understanding of what challenges, opportunities, and alternatives to storage that must be considered alongside storage planning. This report will support Action 1.9 of the Colorado Water Plan.	\$350,000
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Total \$4,000,000