



Colorado River District opposes Flaming Gorge pumpback proposal

The Colorado River District is opposing a proposed Flaming Gorge Reservoir pipeline project through a [motion to intervene](#) with a federal regulatory agency that is reviewing the plan to pump water from the Wyoming reservoir to the Front Range of Colorado.

Fort Collins, Colo., businessman Aaron Million is proposing a 560-mile pipeline, the Regional Water Supply Project (RWSP), which would carry up to 250,000 acre feet of water. It is under review by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for its power-generating aspects. The River District's motion to intervene says, "The volume of water at issue would adversely impact existing users of Colorado's entitlement to the waters of the Colorado River, and could usurp the remainder of the state's compact allocation."

Although the water would be taken out of the Colorado River system from the Green River, a tributary with Wyoming headwaters, under the Colorado River Compact of 1922, the amount still counts against Colorado's limited ability to use the river.

The River District's motion also cites the RWSP as "speculative" with "relatively small demands – nowhere near the volume claimed by the RWSP. Moreover, none of the projected water users have demonstrated the ability to pay for the enormous cost of the project." The RWSP also threatens the ability of the Colorado River District, the state of Colorado and other public entities to plan for the development of the state's remaining entitlement to the Colorado River in a "responsibly conservative matter," the motion states.

Other objections include:

- The need first for the Colorado Water Conservation Board to complete its Colorado River Water Availability Study;
- The need for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to complete its Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study;
- The need for Colorado's West Slope to finalize its own consumptive and nonconsumptive studies; and
- The need for there to be interstate and intrastate agreements on how the water would be managed under the Prior Appropriation System.

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