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The Honorable Bill Owens
Governor of Colorado
State Capitol Building, Room 136
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Governor Owens:

What appears to be the Union Park Project proposal for transmountain diversion of water from the headwaters of the Gunnison River Basin to Colorado's Front Range was recently described in Senate Bill 215. This bill, sponsored by Colorado Senators Evans and Powers and Representative McElhany, calls for study of this project's feasibility. Then, if feasible, it would be developed or undertaken by the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Senate Bill 215 wrongly assumes there are no other options. There are. The best, if new new transmountain diversion must be in Colorado's future, is to do it from the state line. This option is the Colorado Aqueduct Return Project - CARP - designed in 1988 as an alternative to address problems arising from old fashioned transmountain diversions proposals. CARP "returns" Colorado's water entitlement from the state line for reuse in the South Platte, Arkansas, and/or Colorado River Basins - but only after it has first flowed down from the headwaters in which it originated. CARP does not remove water from the upper headwaters (and the possibilities of its future use, instream and out of stream) to leave behind economic, social, and physical problems for those downstream.

CARP is a large pipeline project very similar to others across the world. It does not require a new reservoir. CARP does enable better use of existing reservoirs within our state's four largest river basins. It provides much needed flexibility for matching delivery of water with the pace and locations of future growth within three of these basins. Logically, CARP is a project which should be undertaken by the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

In 1991 proponents estimated Union Park would cost about \$1.4 billion and have a firm yield of 95,000 to 156,000 acre-feet of water. This yield appears doubtful. CARP in 1997 was estimated to cost \$2.3 billion and yield 280,000 to 456,000 acre-feet. The yield is a portion of Colorado's entitlement under the interstate compact determined at the state line. The water is drawn from an average annual flow in the river of 4.6 million acre-feet. The location offers security of supply by draining the largest possible area. In 1997 dollars, an acre-foot of water delivered by CARP would cost \$800 to \$650 depending on volume (including debt service, operations, and electrical power at \$0.02 per kilowatt hour). In 1997 dollars, the cost for Union Park water would be upward of \$1,200 per acre-foot delivered - assuming availability.

Colorado does have other options to be studied - options which address the problems of old fashioned transmountain diversions from the headwaters that sacrifice the future of one part of our state for that of another and that lack flexibility. CARP offers fairness to the futures of all regions of Colorado and makes more economic, environmental, legal, and practical sense. Enclosed is additional information on CARP which was submitted to an interim committee of the legislature in 1997. The concept is based on other similar projects and as designer and promoter, I do not expect a fee. I do expect equal consideration of the Colorado Aqueduct Return Project along with other concepts.

Respectfully:

Ralph E. Clark III

c. Senators John Evans and Ray Powers; Representative Andy McElhany; and others.