

# COLORADO RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

*Protecting Western Colorado Water Since 1937*

*adopted, 3/16/2000*

## **POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING TRANSMOUNTAIN WATER DIVERSIONS**

1. The primary goal of the Colorado River Water Conservation District is the protection of existing water uses and preservation of future economic opportunities for the residents of Western Colorado. The Colorado River District is committed to meeting the present and future water needs of its residents.
2. There is no current or reasonably foreseeable need for new transmountain diversion projects. Front Range water demands can be met through a combination of better groundwater management, reuse, conservation, system interconnections, reoperation, and in-basin transfers and exchanges. Additional transmountain water supplies from existing projects may result from ongoing East Slope-West Slope cooperative water supply investigations.

As identified in the state's Metropolitan Water Supply Investigation (MWSI) and the Senate Bill 96-74 study, nearly 400,000 acre feet of legally usable water supply is currently available annually without construction of any new projects. Although these studies only addressed the Denver metropolitan areas from Douglas County to Denver's northern suburbs, similar opportunities for additional water, such as water reuse, conservation, re-operation, water sharing and others, exist for other areas of Colorado's rapidly growing Front Range.

The Colorado River District supports implementation of recommendations of the

MWSI study and is committed to several cooperative processes designed to address or meet specific, identified Front Range water supply problems. These include: The Eagle River Memorandum of Understanding which seeks to identify and develop additional Eagle River water supplies for both East Slope (Colorado Springs and Aurora) and Eagle River basin water providers in a manner acceptable to West Slope interests; The Douglas County Water Resource Authority-Denver Water-River District collaborative water supply investigation to address water supply needs of the Authority's members in Douglas and Arapahoe Counties; and The Upper Colorado River study which will address water supply, water quality, instream flow and recreation needs in the Upper Colorado River basin. The River District acknowledges that any or all of these efforts may result in some additional transmountain water use, but any required diversion will be accomplished only with the acceptance and involvement and to the mutual benefit of East Slope and West Slope interests.

✓ 3. Present and future West Slope consumptive water uses, as well as environmental and recreational needs, must be recognized and protected prior to diversion of additional transmountain water.

✓ Western Colorado's economy is increasingly dependant on tourism-related construction and recreation industries which rely on adequate instream flows and healthy river systems. This changing economic base for Western Colorado will likely continue into the foreseeable future.

✓ Establishment of adequate protections for instream flows, recreational lake levels, and water quality, especially in the headwaters regions, protects our high mountain valleys and preserves opportunities for future consumptive water uses.

✓ Adequate protections for West Slope environmental and recreational values benefit all Colorado citizens. Western Colorado has become a vital recreation resource for the entire state.