



October 12, 2023

Dear Task Force members,

Thank you for your continued commitment to the Colorado River Drought Mitigation Task Force. The issues being discussed are extremely important to Colorado's farmers and ranchers and we appreciate the continued dialog.

Below are some comments on some of the intrastate tools identified so far. Our focus is to find ways to enhance drought resiliency for agricultural producers specifically.

Storage

- A primary goal should be the rehabilitation and repair of existing storage facilities.
- Suggested Legislative Actions:
 - o Ensure that the Water Supply Reserve Fund account is recharged on an annual basis.
 - o Expand the project criteria for Water Plan grant programs.

Infrastructure Improvements

- The tools identified on the worksheet are good. Don't limit infrastructure improvement funding to only projects with multiple benefits – allow funding for ag infrastructure improvements that primarily benefit ag producers.

Best Management Practices

- Most agricultural water users are interested in implementing BMP's, but additional funding is needed to further incentivize and expedite further adoption.
- Suggested Legislative Actions:
 - o Provide a sustainable and renewable source of revenue to provide funding for further adoption of voluntary best management practices in agricultural water use.

Water Sharing Agreements

- Agricultural water users who voluntarily participate in water sharing agreements must be adequately compensated. Protection against injury is imperative if water sharing agreements are to be accepted.
- Suggested Legislative Actions:
 - o Provide a sustainable and renewable source of revenue to provide funding to incentivize water sharing agreements.
 - o Specify in statute that water sharing agreements must be approved by the SEO to ensure that injury to other water rights does not occur.

Temporary Transactions



- The best way for ag producers to get through drought and be resilient during drought times is reliable water. The best way to get reliable water is to have adequate storage and good infrastructure.
- If other water users like municipal and instream flows want to use ag water in a temporary transaction for drought resiliency, such transactions must be designed to protect against injury to other water rights. Such temporary transactions must also be voluntary and fairly compensated.

Our coalition stands ready to be a resource to you as you continue these very important discussions.

Sincerely,

Colorado Farm Bureau
Colorado Cattlemen's Association
Colorado Livestock Association
Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union

Cc:

Commissioner Becky Mitchell
Attorney General Phil Weiser
Lauren Ris
Kevin Rein
Senator Dylan Roberts
Senator Perry Will
Speaker of the House Julie McCluskie
Representative Marc Catlin