

For Immediate Release

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Over Seven Thousand Coloradans Attend Tele-Town Hall on Flaming Gorge Pipeline

Participants decry enormous cost of project and impact on economy and environment

Denver, CO – Last night 7,400 Coloradans gathered in a telephone town hall hosted by a coalition of conservation organizations and recreation business interests to discuss the proposed Flaming Gorge Pipeline. The project would drain at least 250,000 acre feet of water (over 81 billion gallons) each year out of the Green River and Flaming Gorge Reservoir in southwestern Wyoming, pump the water 500 miles across Wyoming, over the Continental Divide to the Front Range of Colorado. The State of Colorado estimates the pipeline will cost up to \$9 billion to construct, and a financial analysis to be released in August indicates that Eastern Plains farmers could not afford the water that the pipeline would deliver.

“We held this town hall because Coloradans need to know about this boondoggle,” said Elise Jones, Executive Director of Colorado Environmental Coalition. “The cost to Coloradans is immense, from the cost of construction to the negative impact on our recreation economy to the irreversible environmental damage it would cause.”

The Colorado Water Conservation Board is considering a \$150,000 grant request by the pipeline’s proponents that would set up a special task force to consider the pipeline. The Board will make a decision on the grant at their September 13th and 14th meeting, and the coalition of conservation groups and outdoor recreation business owners is asking that this request be denied. Despite the existing stakeholder forums, such as the Interbasin Compact Committee, that are considering the proposal, the pipeline’s proponents want the state to fund a special task force with their rules to cover the same topics.

Town hall panelist Bart Miller of Western Resource Advocates presented information on the environmental impact of the pipeline. “If 81 billion gallons of water is drained from the West Slope’s Green River, it could damage the river’s world class trout fishery, further threaten the population of four fish species on the endangered species list, and hurt the ecosystem within Dinosaur National Monument.”

Panelist Bill Dvorak, owner of Dvorak Expeditions, described the damage the pipeline would do to his business and Colorado’s recreation and tourism economy. “When the fish thin out and the rivers dry to a trickle, fewer people come out to the West Slope,” said Dvorak. “That means fewer people eat in local restaurants, stay in hotels and stop off for a beer after a day on the River. Our whole economy in Western Colorado is impacted.”

The coalition of groups also launched a grassroots petition at the town hall to oppose state funding for the special Flaming Gorge pipeline task force. The petition is online at: <http://bit.ly/nbW4SJ>. The coalition plans to deliver the petition with thousands of signatures to the Colorado Water Conservation Board in advance of their September 13th & 14th meeting.

Conservation groups participating in the coalition opposing the Flaming Gorge Project include:

American Rivers, American Whitewater, Clean Water Fund, Colorado Conservation Voters, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Colorado Whitewater Association, Environment Colorado, Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of Northwest Colorado, Friends of the Yampa, High Country Citizens' Alliance, National Parks Conservation Association, Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club, Rocky Mountain Wild, Save the Colorado, Save the Poudre, Sheep Mountain Alliance, Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, Western Resource Advocates

Audio clips from the town hall meeting are available online:

- [Project cost](#)
- [Who will pay?](#)
- [Project impacts on fish](#)
- [Concern about project, appreciation for town hall forum](#)

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