

Third Extraordinary Session
Sixty-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. M02S-2037.01 Priscilla Hemmerich

SJM02S-001

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Senate Committees

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Agriculture and Natural Resources

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 02S-001

101 MEMORIALIZING CONGRESS TO SUPPORT LONG-RANGE PROGRAM
102 DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN STATES TO INCREASE WATER
103 STORAGE AND CAPACITY.

1 WHEREAS, Water is the lifeblood of the arid west, sustaining
2 communities, local economies, and a richly diverse natural environment;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Demand for water in Colorado is projected to
5 increase dramatically as the state's population continues to grow; and

6 WHEREAS, The 2000 census showed that Colorado's population
7 grew by nearly 30% since 1990, and demographers project similar growth
8 patterns into the future; and

9 WHEREAS, Commensurate with the spike in Colorado's
10 population will come a sizeable increase in demand for water; and

11 WHEREAS, The State of Colorado is presently mired in the throes
12 of one of the worst drought years in recorded history; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 WHEREAS, Colorado's snowpack, the ultimate source of clean
2 drinking water for communities and irrigation water for farmers and
3 ranchers, was 19% of average as of May 1, 2002, an all-time low for the
4 state; and

5 WHEREAS, According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
6 Administration, on June 1, 2002, five of Colorado's river basins were
7 experiencing extreme or severe drought conditions and the remaining two
8 basins were experiencing extreme moderate or near moderate drought
9 conditions in terms of surface flows; and

10 WHEREAS, According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
11 Administration, on June 6, 2002, precipitation was a mere 18% of its
12 historical average in the Upper Rio Grande Basin and 24% of average in
13 the Upper Arkansas Basin; and

14 WHEREAS, According to the Natural Resources Conservation
15 Service, reservoir storage in the Colorado River Basin, the South Platte
16 River Basin, and the San Juan River Basin were all in excess of 200,000
17 acre-feet below their historic averages; and

18 WHEREAS, According to the National Weather Service, drought
19 conditions are expected to persist in the western United States through
20 September; and

21 WHEREAS, Colorado is deeply dependent on reservoirs and other
22 forms of water storage to capture run-off in the spring and summer
23 months, which the state substantially relies on for water in dry seasons
24 and dry years; and

25 WHEREAS, The last great drought in Colorado, occurring in
26 1977, had a substantially negative impact on Colorado's economy,
27 deflating numerous sectors ranging from farming and agriculture to
28 tourism; and

29 WHEREAS, The 2002 drought has already showed measurable
30 signs of adversely impacting the Colorado economy in a manner similar
31 to 1977; and

32 WHEREAS, This summer's drought season has fueled the worst
33 wildfire season in the history of Colorado and abetted catastrophic blazes,
34 such as the Hayman Fire along the front range and the Missionary Ridge
35 Fire near Durango, that have destroyed hundreds of homes and other
36 structures; and

37 WHEREAS, These drought-induced fires have had an irrevocably
38 damaging effect on the natural environment, including the state's air,
39 water, and pristine forests; and

40 WHEREAS, While the 2002 drought has been unusually
41 destructive in its scope and consequence, drought conditions have and
42 will continue to occur in the west on a semi-regular basis, necessitating
43 bold and forward-looking strategies focused on ensuring adequate water

1 supplies for ever-growing western communities; now, therefore,

2 *Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-third General Assembly*
3 *of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:*

4 (1) That the Congress of the United States is hereby memorialized
5 to support western states in developing long-range programs to increase
6 water storage and capacity, including the development and expansion of
7 new and existing reservoirs and other water storage projects, consistent
8 with the procedural and substantive requirements of applicable state
9 water law.

10 (2) That the members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation
11 are hereby memorialized to affirmatively develop and aggressively
12 support programs, policies, and projects aimed at increasing water storage
13 capacity in the State of Colorado, in a manner that honors the primacy of
14 the State of Colorado in appropriating, adjudicating, and managing water
15 rights, claims, and interests.

16 *Be It Further Resolved,* That copies of this Joint Memorial be sent
17 to each member of the Colorado Congressional Delegation.