

For Immediate Release

July 26, 2011

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ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS FORMALLY OPPOSE FLAMING GORGE PIPELINE

Tele-Townhall with thousands will launch effort to stop new state funding for project

Denver, CO – Today a large coalition of conservation groups in Colorado announced their formal opposition to a proposed, massive water development project from the Colorado River basin. The project, called the “Flaming Gorge Pipeline,” proposes to 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.

A few cities and private, for-profit water developers have expressed an interest in the project. In mid-July, the Army Corps of Engineers decided to cancel its environmental review of the private project saying the project proponent repeatedly failed to meet the Corps’ permitting deadlines. The Colorado Water Conservation Board – which is appointed by Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper – is being asked to consider devoting \$150,000 to studying the project’s feasibility. The State of Colorado estimates the project could cost up to \$9 billion to construct.

“Creating the Flaming Gorge pipeline would cost billions of dollars we don’t have, it would deliver water at a price that nobody can afford, and it would land a devastating blow to our environment,” said Elise Jones, Executive Director of Colorado Environmental Coalition. “Now, the proponents of this project want the state to spend \$150,000 of taxpayer dollars on an unnecessary process to push the project forward. Enough is enough.”

“Coloradans need to know about this boondoggle,” said Bill Dvorak. “People in this state recognize the need for balanced water supply policies that preserve what’s best about Colorado – this pipeline does not meet that standard.” The coalition points out that the pipeline would result in irreparable environmental impacts on Flaming Gorge Reservoir and the Green River below the reservoir, a world class trout fishery and recreation destination for many Coloradoans. It would also further drain the Colorado River, which is already under great strain. Only in rare years does the river flow to its delta in the Gulf of California.

Conservation groups note we can save water, money, and our rivers by investing in cheaper and faster alternatives to this destructive project. “There are a host of alternatives to meet Colorado’s future water supply needs, including urban water conservation, water reuse and

recycling, and voluntary water sharing arrangements between farmers and cities that all should be part of our future” said Bart Miller of Western Resource Advocates. “We need to begin making those investments now instead of chasing this 500-mile pipe dream.”

The coalition of environmental groups is hosting a telephone town hall in which thousands of Coloradans are expected to participate tomorrow at 7pm at which they will discuss the proposed pipeline and its flaws. Any member of the public can join the town hall by visiting www.westernresources.org/pipeline.

Alexandra Cousteau’s Expedition Blue Planet and Colorado’s Trout Unlimited, have online videos presenting the current destruction of the Upper and Lower Colorado River:

- Alexandra Cousteau's Expedition Blue Planet at the Gulf of California in Mexico: <http://www.alexandracousteau.org/field/expedition-films/death-river-colorado-river-delta>
- Trout Unlimited at the Upper Colorado near Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzWA8gTb4og&feature=player_embedded

Conservation groups who oppose the Flaming Gorge Project include:

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

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