

Adopted, April 19, 2016

Water Quality

Colorado River Water Conservation District Policy Statement:

The Colorado River District's primary objective with respect to water quality is to protect the ability of the district's residents to use water beneficially now and in the future. To this end, the River District supports the following concepts:

- 1. The River District will advocate for and may participate in the prevention or mitigation of those activities that adversely impact water quality whenever existing or future beneficial water uses, the ecological health of rivers and streams, or local economies dependent on certain water quality may be threatened.**
- 2. Water quality negotiations, classifications, and enforcement decisions should be based on sound scientific data and methodologies and should not impose unreasonable financial burdens or operational constraints on historical water users.**
- 3. The River District will generally support legislative and regulatory measures that provide and protect water quality it deems reasonable and necessary to support and protect the present and future economy and quality of life in the region.**
- 4. The River District will oppose any mandatory, nonpoint source regulations for farming and ranching activities but will encourage the voluntary implementation of reasonable best management practices and programs. The River District will generally advocate for incentives and rewards for non-point pollution prevention and clean-up efforts.**
- 5. Any new or substantially amended regulations must be implemented with sufficient resources allocated to the affected enforcing authorities and to affected water users and land owners.**

Background & Discussion:

The Colorado River District is committed to meeting the present and future water needs of its residents. The River District recognizes that water quality and water quantity are often inseparable. Water quality, however, can be an important factor in the ability of the Colorado River District's residents to beneficially use water.

The tension between water quality and water quantity interests is long and varied. The inter-relationship between the two, is better recognized and accepted today. There is a causative link between the amount of stream flow present and the water quality of the stream. Water diversions inevitably have some impact on water quality. However, this impact may not be measurable or significant to either water users or to the environment.

Water quality regulation is largely driven by federal statutes and regulations, principally the Clean Water Act and regulations promulgated under this act. Historically, new programs, regulatory requirements, and judicial interpretations are implemented without companion resources.

In Colorado, responsibility for water quality protection is almost exclusively vested in the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission and Division within the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment. In contrast, responsibility for water quantity allocation and administration is generally vested with the Water Courts and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. As integration between water quantity and water quality evolves, local governments should be provided a role in the monitoring, management and enforcement of water quality programs. Local governments' role should be voluntary, based on the needs and resources of the community, and not mandated.

As consumptive water uses in Colorado continue to be developed and drought cycles occur, water quality will be an ever greater issue for Colorado water users.