



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General Phil Weiser urges collaboration, innovative water policy solutions in speech at Rio Grande State of the Basin Symposium

Feb. 23, 2019 (ALAMOSA, Colo.) — In a speech at a water symposium in the San Luis Valley, Attorney General Phil Weiser today said collaborative problem solving and innovation are central to success in tackling state and regional water challenges. The Attorney General also expressed skepticism and grave concern about a proposal that is being developed to transfer ground water from the San Luis Valley to the Front Range.

Weiser joined former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, members of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, leaders of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, and other state and local stakeholders at the first Rio Grande State of the Basin Symposium at the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center at Adams State University in Alamosa, to discuss opportunities and challenges in water policy. In his keynote speech, Weiser pledged leadership and support from the Attorney General's Office to encourage innovative solutions as part of the right way to manage water.

"Going forward, we will address our water management challenges—with leadership and support from our office—by encouraging innovative solutions. These can include strategies for reducing water use and sustaining agricultural productivity; implementing conservation strategies; supporting healthy forests, watersheds, and soils; restoring rivers and streams; exploring ways to update our infrastructure; and implementing reuse and smart storage solutions," said Weiser.

Additionally, Weiser said the law around out-of-basin transfers was developed to protect local communities and their resources. Proposals currently being developed to pump water from the San Luis Valley to the Front Range should be viewed "very skeptically" from legal, economic, and ecological perspectives.

"There is a right way to handle water in Colorado and a wrong way. This means that, in communities where access to water is a central driver of the economy, we need to use the legal tools at our disposal to protect those communities and their local economies. We at the Attorney General's Office will be working hard to do things the right way and to protect the Valley. As you evaluate proposed projects that are not designed to protect your community, please know that we will stand with you and work with you to protect your ecological and economic future," Weiser concluded.

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