



## **SB23-295 Colorado River Drought Task Force**

**Senators Roberts & Will / Speaker McCluskie & Representative Catlin**

The Colorado River is in the midst of a three-decade drought, the worst in over 1,200 years. This threatens Colorado's supplies of water for drinking, and agricultural needs, as well as the State's environment and economy. New and more flexible tools are needed to help Colorado communities, and all who depend on our rivers, respond to these threats and address climate change. Without clear action in the immediate future, these problems will only get worse.

**SB23-295** is a broad-based and bipartisan effort that codifies a collaborative path forward addressing one of the most pressing issues our state has ever faced - the endangered Colorado River. It provides important seats at the table for agricultural producers, Western Slope communities, and Conservation Districts charged with protecting the Colorado River's water resources. It also provides space for engaging other interests across the state to navigate a complex and rapidly evolving water future. A task force will meet starting in July and through the end of the year to make legislative recommendations focused on the following:

- Proactively addressing climate-driven drought impacts on the Colorado River & its tributaries;
- Avoiding disproportionate economic/environmental impacts to any one region of the state, ensuring acquisition of agricultural water rights is voluntary, temporary, and compensated;
- Providing for collaboration among the Colorado River Water Conservation District, Southwestern Water Conservation District, and the State of Colorado in the design and implementation of drought security programs; and
- Evaluating sources of revenue for the acquisition of program water.

### **The Drought Task Force is comprised of the following representatives:**

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| • The Department of Natural Resources (DNR)                                           | • A statewide agricultural organization                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| • The Commission of Agriculture                                                       | • A local government from within the Southwestern Water Conservation District                                                                                                                                             |
| • The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe                                                          | • A local government from within the Colorado River Water Conservation District                                                                                                                                           |
| • The Southern Ute Tribe                                                              | • An industrial water user located on the Western Slope                                                                                                                                                                   |
| • The Colorado River Water Conservation District;                                     | • Two environmental organizations with expertise in water policy & Colorado River governance                                                                                                                              |
| • The Southwestern Water Conservation District                                        | • Sub-Task Force to study Tribal matters, comprised of the representatives from the Southern Ute Tribe, Ute Mountain Tribe, Executive Director of the DNR & two other members jointly appointed by Sub-Task Force members |
| • The Southeastern Colorado Conservancy District                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| • The Northern Colorado Conservancy District                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| • An agricultural producer from within the Southwestern Water Conservation District   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| • An agricultural producer from within the Colorado River Water Conservation District |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| • A front range municipal water provider that diverts water from the CO River         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

### **Supporters:**

Colorado Farm Bureau • Colorado River Water Conservation District • Conservation Colorado • Eagle River Water and Sanitation District • Grand Valley Water Users Association • Healthy Air and Water Colorado • Northwest Colorado Council of Governments • Special District Association of Colorado • The Nature Conservancy • Western Resource Advocates

### **For more information contact:**

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