



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY of Alan Berryman  
Assistant General Manager  
Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District**

April 26, 2007

The Honorable Grace Napolitano, Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Water & Power  
United States House of Representatives  
1522 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: H.R. 07-1462, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and Pathfinder  
Modification Authorization Act

Madam Chair and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Alan Berryman. I am Assistant General Manager for the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (“Northern Water”) in Berthoud, Colorado. Thank you for inviting me to testify before you in support of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and Pathfinder Modification Authorization Act. The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (“Program”) is a cooperative, basin-wide solution created to resolve escalating conflicts between water use and endangered species protection. These conflicts arise during federal permitting of both existing and planned irrigation and municipal water supply projects in the Platte River basin. Such endangered species issues in the central Platte River are of particular concern to Northern Water and other Colorado water users in the South Platte River basin. Resolution of these conflicts is of state interest and is important to all who live and work along Colorado’s rapidly growing Front Range. Northern Water is requesting your support for H.R. 07-1462 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in and contribute funding toward the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program for Threatened and Endangered Species in the Central and Lower Platte River basin in Nebraska, and to modify the Pathfinder Dam and Reservoir in Wyoming.

Northern Water is the contract beneficiary of water yielded from the Colorado-Big Thompson (“C-BT”) Project, which is the largest transmountain water diversion project in Colorado. The C-BT Project annually delivers about 213,000 acre-feet of water to northeastern Colorado as a supplemental water supply to 32 cities and towns and approximately 700,000 acres of irrigated farmland in northeastern Colorado. To continue to meet the growing water demands along Colorado’s Front Range, Northern Water is also involved in new regional water planning activities and projects, including the Northern Integrated Supply Project (“NISP”) that is currently working through the federal permitting process. That proposed project is designed to develop 40,000 acre-feet of water for 16 water providers located within Northern Water’s boundaries.

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Whether it is a reliable, time-proven water supply project like the C-BT Project or an anticipated new project like NISP, both must comply with the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”) requirements to continue to provide historically relied-upon water supplies, or to obtain the necessary federal permits that allow the development of a new water supply for Colorado’s rapidly growing population. Recent studies completed by the Colorado Water Conservation Board to assess future urban water supply needs in the state show that the population within Colorado’s South Platte River basin is anticipated to grow by 65 percent from the year 2000 to the year 2030. To meet the demands from that growth, water providers in the region will have to develop more than 400,000 acre-feet of water in a basin that is already over-appropriated. This will require significant additions to water infrastructure such as pipelines and reservoirs which, in turn, will require compliance with ESA to permit their construction. Northern Water sincerely believes that the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program is the best available solution to address the species’ needs under the ESA and also allow the continued use and development of water in the three states that share the Platte River basin.

Northern Water has been involved in Program negotiations since 1994 on behalf of itself and other Colorado water users. During the 12-year negotiation period, Northern Water was a member of the Platte River Project (“PRP”), a group of more than 25 water user and water supply organizations in the South Platte River basin in Colorado that worked collaboratively with the State of Colorado to help craft the Program. Currently, Northern Water is a member of the Board of Directors of the South Platte Water Related Activities Program, Inc. (“SPWRAP”), a Colorado non-profit corporation recently formed to replace the PRP group and represent the interests of Colorado water users who will be participating in the Program. SPWRAP has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Colorado which commits SPWRAP to work with the State of Colorado in meeting Colorado’s obligations under the Program. SPWRAP membership is currently growing daily, and we expect that the majority of municipalities and many agricultural entities will become members in SPWRAP. Northern Water has also allowed me to serve as the Colorado water user representative on the Program’s Governance Committee as a commitment to continue to move the Program forward for the benefit of the species and the water users.

Northern Water has been, and remains, committed to developing and implementing a cooperative, basin-wide solution that resolves conflicting water use and ESA issues. This Program will provide the regulatory compliance under the ESA for both existing and prospective new water uses within the Platte River basin and will help protect and ensure the future for water users and the endangered species. However, the Program can only be successful if it is adequately funded. We respectfully request the support and assistance of this Subcommittee to authorize and fund this vitally important program. Again, thank you for allowing me to testify before this Subcommittee today.

Sincerely,

Alan D. Berryman  
Assistant General Manager