

Rep. Gardner wrong about NISP, again

A couple of weeks ago in the Fort Collins Coloradoan, U.S. Rep Cory Gardner was once again ranting about the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project. The article offered no counter-balance of Gardner's claims, but once again, Gardner's statements had no basis in fact.

First, Gardner claimed NISP would bring new jobs to the region, and also suggested that if NISP is not built, those jobs wouldn't come. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for NISP does not support this claim. In fact, what Gardner fails to understand is that the DEIS process for NISP (and the upcoming Supplemental DEIS) will provide water to NISP participants through either an "action" alternative (such as building NISP) or a "no-action" alternative. In either case, NISP participants will get water and no more jobs will be created whether NISP or another no-action alternative is built.

Specifically on this point, the DEIS contains this statement: "Implementation of any of the alternatives would not likely change land use or zoning plans of participant communities, increase employment opportunities, or increase other growth pressures compared to the No Action alternative." (Socioeconomic Technical report-3-6-2008, p. 114).

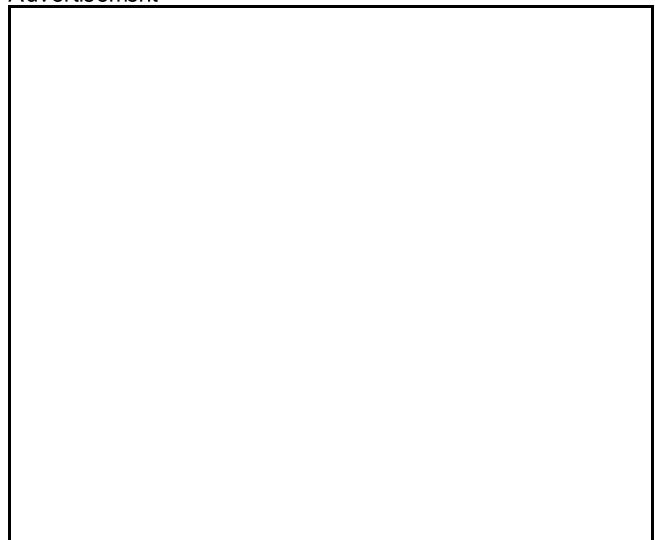
Will NISP provide some jobs to build the

dam? Yes. Will the "no-action alternative" provide jobs, too? Yes. In addition, a strong case can be made (and should be made in the SDEIS) that a well-structured no-action alternative (that Save The Poudre calls a "healthy rivers alternative") relying on water conservation, water-sharing agreements with farmers and water recycling would provide more long-term and higher-paying "green jobs" that protect the Cache la Poudre River and protect our region's future.

Second, Gardner claims NISP would boost the regional economy. Wrong again. In fact, the DEIS contains this paragraph on this exact topic that refutes Gardner's claims:

"None of the NISP alternatives, however, actually bring new money into the region. It is anticipated that the costs of NISP would be 100 percent locally financed by the NISP participants through connection charges collected from new developments and, in some cases, from increases in water rates. ... Higher water bills and connection charges would reduce the amount of

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money that local residents and businesses have to spend on other goods and services in the region." (Socioeconomic Technical report-3-6-2008, p. 81).

Stated differently, real people in NISP towns would pay for NISP through their water rates or their mortgages - this money would come out of these people's pockets and go to their local government to pay for NISP, thus reducing the amount of money people can spend on what they want (food, cars, TVs, college tuition?) versus what the government wants (NISP). There is no Santa Claus in NISP - it would be a local government-paid-for project likely costing a billion dollars of public debt that would be paid back by higher water rates for existing homeowners and higher tap fees for future homeowners for 20 to 30 years.

It seems like every few months Gardner flies home from Washington D.C. and takes a quick tour of Northern Colorado to rant about NISP. And every few months, his rants have no basis in fact.

If NISP is built, it won't provide any more jobs than if NISP is stopped dead in its tracks. And, NISP won't increase economic activity in Northern Colorado, but will cost Northern Coloradans more of their hard-earned dollars - about a billion of them.

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