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**COLORADO**  
**HOUSE MAJORITY COMMUNICATIONS**  
**STATE CAPITOL**

**REP FISCHER: JUST BECAUSE YOU DON'T USE IT  
DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD LOSE IT**

*Pro Poudre River bill allows ranchers & farmers to keep more water in Colorado's rivers and  
maintain their historic water right*

Maintaining a healthy, fast-flowing Poudre River is one of Colorado's highest priorities. A healthy Poudre supports surrounding communities and powers Colorado's regional agricultural and tourism economies. **State Representative Randy Fischer (D-Fort Collins)** has come up with one simple answer to continue driving both: keep unused water in the Poudre and other Colorado rivers. **House Bill 1280**, sponsored by Rep. Fischer, will allow ranchers and farmers to do just that while maintaining their historic water rights.

"Right now, ranchers and farmers can lose their water rights if they don't use all the water they are given annually," said Rep. Fischer. "Just think how backward that is! There's no incentive to keep water in Colorado's rivers and streams. There's no incentive for a farmer to switch to a less water-intensive crop. There's no incentive to turn off the tap."

Current law requires individuals and businesses to 'use it or lose it,' meaning that individuals who own water rights meet what is called their 'historic consumptive water use' every year. If they don't meet that historic level, then they can lose the water they are entitled to use. Subsequently, there is no incentive for individuals to save water, because if they do, they lose access to it forever.

House Bill 1280 would allow water rights owners to keep their water rights when they lease or loan unused water to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). The measure would help Colorado maintain healthy rivers, including its cold water fisheries and a burgeoning recreation economy.

"This bill would go a long way toward conserving and maintaining the quality of our rivers and streams," said Rep. Fischer. "We live in a large, dry western state that's susceptible to drought. It's essential that we reward – not punish – those who conserve and leave some of the water that they are entitled to in the stream for all."

HB 1280 passed the Agriculture, Livestock & Natural Resources Committee today. It now moves to the full House for further consideration.

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