
« [Funny Money Not a Joke to Police](#)
[Legal Notices - June 26, 2008](#) »

Old West or New Energy?

By James Ross

House District 49 Candidate

Two major stories involve the people of House District 49 and Northern Colorado: the proposed Glade Reservoir and uranium mining projects. The plot of these tales is as old as the American West itself, and centers on the big dam walls and deep mine holes that threaten our most precious resource: water.

The plot is simple: Old West or new energy.

If these projects go forward, our health could be threatened and the public good will once again be squeezed out by short-sighted interests in the form of reduced Poudre River flows, the risk of contaminated aquifers and unnatural debt-driven regional growth.

These stories revolve around good ole' boom or bust economics of the Old West. But too often this has been a tale of private gain at the public's expense, raising serious public concerns today that weren't fully considered in the past. It's high time boom/bust water and mineral development policies of yesteryear make way for the new energy imperatives of a New West.

For Berthoud, the long-term financial costs of the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project became prohibitive. After listening to five hours of public comment on the draft Environmental Impacts Statement last Monday evening, other communities may do well to follow Berthoud's lead.

The high cost of this water project would be borne out over decades, threatening to pressure communities to grow unnaturally fast to pay for it. And this growth would spur other needs - including emergency services to public schools to more roads - that have to be built, paid for and maintained to boot. Where is the money going to come from? We've already had enough "borrow and spend" at the federal level to keep us in the red for generations.

This massive Old West water project is based on regional growth projections that ignore the basic economic realities squeezing families today, like the rising cost of food and fuel and a mounting foreclosure crisis.

Smart growth, on the other hand, would look at the bigger resource picture - with an eye toward conservation - and plan with long-term sustainability in mind. The big Glade wall would be built upon assumed growth and scarcity fears; a smarter approach starts from a vision of a better, greener future ... and deliberately plans for it.

In the case of a foreign corporation drilling for uranium near the densely populated and growing communities of Northern Colorado, the environmental, health and economic impacts need to be fully weighed against known threats to the public good. Farmers that depend on groundwater cannot afford the risk. Our children depend on us to make the right choice.

Where do we draw the line? When do we say that higher fees, publicly funded debt, and forced growth, all for the benefit of a few individuals, are not good for our region? After our water is contaminated? After our farms are gone? After our health has suffered? After our endangered river is bone dry? Put simply, the price is too high.

As we work - deliberately - toward a better future, the broader public good will demand smart private development. To accomplish this we've got to shed the stubborn boom or bust mentality and turn toward sensible alternatives that are very much our own: water conservation, solar power and wind generation.

The promise is simple: new energy or the Old West.

For more information email James at James@Ross49.org, call 970-402-7579 , or go to the campaign website, www.ross49.org

This entry was posted on Thursday, June 19th, 2008 at 5:47 pm and is filed under [Berthoud Matters](#), [Uncategorized](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

The Berthoud Recorder is proudly powered by [WordPress](#)
[Entries \(RSS\)](#) and [Comments \(RSS\)](#).

☺