

October 31, 2011

To: Kenneth Lund, Director State of Colorado Office of Economic Development

From: Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper

RE: U.S. Rep. Gardner's Misinformed Letter

Hello Mr. Lund,

On 10-28-2011, U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner sent you a letter about the Northern Integrated Supply Project.

That letter is here: <http://gardner.house.gov/press-release/gardner-urges-office-economic-development-support-nisp> Unfortunately, Rep. Gardner's letter contains false and misleading information, and has numerous errors of omission.

First, Rep. Gardner states that NISP is for "rural areas." Not true. Of the 15 participants in NISP, 12 are growing suburban areas mostly within commuting distance to Denver, and 6 are generally considered to be Denver metropolitan area suburbs. NISP is not for "rural" Colorado – it is for future suburban population growth many of which are future suburban commuters to Denver.

Second, Rep. Gardner says the eastern plains need more water storage. That may be true, but NISP won't benefit the eastern plains. Again, NISP is for suburban commuters, almost all of which are along the I-25 corridor. Further, NISP is exorbitantly expensive – costing at least \$12,500/acre-foot and perhaps as high as \$20,000/acre-foot. It is our understanding that no irrigated crop farmers on the eastern plains could afford such expensive irrigation water even if they wanted to benefit from NISP.

Third, Rep. Gardner suggests all farmers support NISP. Not true. NISP is highly controversial in the farm community. The Larimer County Ag Advisory Board even had a "minority opinion" report which highlighted that controversy. We encourage you to read "The Farm Facts About NISP" to get a broader understanding of the farm impacts of NISP. (Read it here: <http://savethepoudre.org/docs/farm-facts-april2011.pdf>) NISP would help force the dry-up of up to 123,000 acres of Colorado farms, many of which would be sold off and subdivided to make way for new population growth.

Fourth, Rep. Gardner states that NISP is for “municipalities and farms.” Misleading. At least 90% of NISP water is for future suburban populations. A small percentage (less than 5%) may be for the dairy industry, but no non-dairy irrigated crop farmers are participating in NISP because NISP is way too expensive. Additionally, up to 5% (or maybe more over time) of NISP may be for oil and gas drilling and fracking – a few NISP participants are selling water for oil and gas drilling and fracking, a huge new industrial (and potentially toxic) use of water in northern Colorado which Rep. Gardner’s letter fails to mention.

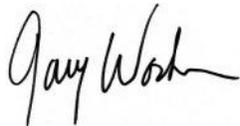
Finally, Rep. Gardner’s letter contains numerous errors of omission, such as:

- Many groups and organizations have not supported NISP due to the extreme controversy, such as CCI, PVREA, and OEDIT under Director Romero.
- NISP would drain up to 71% of the water out of the Poudre River through downtown Fort Collins and irrevocably harm the Cache la Poudre River and the economic benefits Fort Collins and other communities receive from the river.
- The Fort Collins City Council unanimously opposed NISP.
- The U.S. EPA said NISP "is not in compliance with the Clean Water Act".
- The State of Colorado Water Quality Control Division denied NISP an early water quality certification.
- NISP would require many small, struggling Weld County towns to borrow a total of \$300 million - \$700 million in public debt to pay for the project.
- One of NISP's proposed reservoir sites is on top of fracked oil and gas wells.
- NISP permitting may become even more complex because a few NISP towns are selling millions of gallons of water for oil and gas drilling and fracking.
- NISP would increase flooding damage on the Poudre River.
- A huge coalition of environmental groups opposes NISP.
- NISP is now over 6 years late and at least \$150 million over budget. The final cost could be \$800 million or more (more than double the original \$350 million estimate).

Save the Poudre supports the right of NISP communities to get more water, but we oppose NISP and we will fight to stop NISP for as long as it takes. We have created a “Healthy Rivers Alternative” to NISP that better protects farms and rural Colorado, and protects the Cache la Poudre River. (Please read about it here: [http://poudreriver.home.comcast.net/%7Epoudreriver/Healthy\\_Rivers\\_Alternative.pdf](http://poudreriver.home.comcast.net/%7Epoudreriver/Healthy_Rivers_Alternative.pdf) )

We’d be happy to discuss NISP further with you. Please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,



Gary Wockner, PhD, Director

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<http://savethepoudre.org>

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