

For Immediate Release

Save The Poudre Coalition

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<http://savethepoudre.org>

Contact Gary Wockner, 970-218-8310

GOVERNOR RITTER SIGNS BILL THAT COULD HELP SAVE THE POUUDRE!

House Bill 1067 allows tax credits for water donations to support "instream flows" in Colorado rivers

Fort Collins, CO -- On Thursday, June 4th, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter signed House Bill 1067. The bill -- supported by Fort Collins Representatives Kefalas and Fischer, and by Fort Collins Senator Bacon -- allows water rights holders to donate water to Colorado rivers through the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). A water rights holder would get a state income tax credit equal to 50% of the value of the water right to convert the water to an "instream flow" in Colorado rivers.

The new law operates somewhat like the tax credit that a landowner can receive for putting a conservation easement on their property, a program that has resulted in saving hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland and open space in Colorado. By creating a direct financial incentive for water rights holders to donate all or partial water rights to the CWCB, more Colorado rivers and streams can now be protected. Additionally, healthy stream flows in rivers like the Poudre support healthy local economies that rely on recreation such as rafting and kayaking to succeed.

"Governor Ritter continues to show strong leadership in protecting Colorado's environment," said Gary Wockner of the Save The Poudre Coalition. "Just like how you can get a tax credit for preserving your land, you can now get a tax credit for preserving a river. It's a visionary approach that empowers owners of water to invest in conservation."

The program will cap the individual tax credit claimed by rights holders to \$100,000, and cap the entire tax credit program at \$2,000,000 per year in the state. Rivers like the Poudre -- which was named one of the Most Endangered Rivers in America -- could potentially benefit from the instream flow donations. The Save The Poudre Coalition has been promoting an "instream flow program" for the Poudre River as a piece of a package of efforts needed to keep the Poudre River alive.

"The Cache la Poudre River flowing through Fort Collins could potentially benefit from this new tax incentive," said Wockner. "Farmers, developers, and any individual who owns a water right could help save the Colorado's rivers and streams. Governor Ritter is supporting a win-win solution for rivers and for water owners."

Gov. Ritter signed House Bill 1067 on June 4th at the State Capitol.

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