

## **For Immediate Release**

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Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper

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# **Save The Poudre Tells Army Corps To Reject Tainted Money To “Expedite” NISP Permitting**

**Governor Hickenlooper should follow his own words:**

**“Every Discussion About Water Should Start With Conservation”**

**Fort Collins, CO** – Yesterday, Save The Poudre sent a [letter](#) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers telling them to reject money from the Northern Colorado Water Conservation District (NCWCD) that would be used to “expedite” the permitting process for the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP) and its Glade Reservoir. Using an arcane provision in federal law, NCWCD has asked the Corps to allow NCWCD to directly give the Corps extra money so NISP permitting can be “expedited.” That request from NCWCD forced the Corps to issue a [“public comment period”](#) so the public can weigh in on NCWCD’s request. The comment period ended yesterday, May 1st.

NCWCD’s request to give money to the Corps to expedite NISP permitting comes a year after Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper sent a [letter](#) to the Corps that was [filled with misinformation](#) about NISP asking the Corps to make NISP permitting a “high priority.”

Save The Poudre sees plenty of reasons for the Corps to reject the tainted money.

“The review of NISP needs to be thorough, sound, and scientific, not fast-tracked under political pressure,” said Gary Wockner of Save The Poudre, a group that has been bird-dogging the project for eight years. “Real science takes real time, and NISP would drain and destroy the Cache la Poudre River forever – the Corps needs to protect the river, abide by the law, and make sure every impact of this devastating project is analyzed.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is in charge of the permitting process for NISP – a project that is now years late and at least \$150 million over budget – and the Corps also acts as the judge that either grants or denies the permit. If the Corps were directly paid by the applicant (NCWCD) to expedite the permit, Save The Poudre sees the appearance of a conflict of interest.

“This proposal creates the appearance of a conflict of interest for the Corps,” continued Wockner. “Should you be able to pay the judge to fast-track your case in court? We don’t think so, no matter which powerful politician wants it done.”

“NISP is extremely controversial and already under a glare of public scrutiny and skepticism,” said Wockner. “If the Corps fast-tracks the process and then grants the

permit under political pressure, it will only increase scrutiny and further invite challenges to the project and permit.”

Although NISP was originally conceived of to provide water for future population growth, several NISP cities are now selling water to frackers at prices a lot higher than it is sold to residential customers. Additionally, Governor Hickenlooper has taken a rabidly strong stance in support of fracking by starring in ads for the natural gas industry and threatening to sue any city that bans fracking. Ironically, in his 2013 ‘State of the State’ speech, the Governor also said, “Every discussion about water should start with conservation” which conservation groups turned into a [video petition](#) encouraging the Governor to do just that.

“Why is Governor Hickenlooper wanting the Corps to prioritize the permitting process for a huge environmentally destructive dam and reservoir project?” asked Wockner. “That certainly is not starting a discussion about conservation.”