



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 10, 2011

Contact: Gary Wockner, Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper, 970-218-8310

<http://SaveThePoudre.org>

Save the Poudre Uncovers Scheme to Insert NISP into the "Bottom Up" Economic Plan Submitted to Governor Hickenlooper

Fort Collins, CO -- Governor Hickenlooper's Economic Development Planning process -- known as "bottom up" -- hit a major, cynical snag in northern Colorado this week as Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper uncovered an apparent last-minute scheme to manipulate the results given to Governor Hickenlooper to include the massively controversial Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP).

"We are extremely concerned about the process and product of this planning effort," said Gary Wockner of Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper. "Governor Hickenlooper needs to be immediately informed that the public process appears to have been subverted and that the final northern Colorado plan did not represent Larimer County citizens."

On April, 26, 2011, Gary Wockner, Director of Save the Poudre, received an email (below) that was forwarded to him that originally came from the Larimer County Manager -- the email was sent to only 43 people asking for quick public comment about Larimer County's proposed "bottom up" economic development matrix to be sent to the Governor.

The economic development matrix for Larimer County that was attached to the email asking for public comment is here:

http://poudriver.home.comcast.net/~poudriver/Economic_Goals_and_Strategies_for_Larimer_County_Colorado-4-27-11.pdf

Of specific note, the April 27, 2011 matrix said absolutely nothing about water storage or the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP).

Only eight days after the matrix went out for public comment, Larimer County and Weld County submitted a combined final "Bottom Up 2011 County Economic Development Summary" to Governor Hickenlooper that included a brand new category as compared to the Larimer County matrix sent out for public comment. That brand new category was about "water storage" (#4) and said: "Lobby for and support proposed water storage facilities such as NISP, and Halligan and Seamans Reservoirs." The combined final plan that was submitted to the Governor is here: http://poudriver.home.comcast.net/~poudriver/Weld-Larimer-Region2-Economic-Development-Plan-Matrix-May-4-2011_gaiter.pdf

This huge and controversial addition was only then disclosed to the public two days later, on Saturday evening May 7th, when an article was posted online on the *Greeley Tribune's* website discussing it: <http://www.greeleytribune.com/article/20110507/BUSINESS/705079975/1008&parentprofile=1001>

The new combined plan included NISP without any apparent written request from Larimer County citizens who were asked to comment on the proposed matrix. As revealed in subsequent communications with the County, it appears that only one -- *one* -- written comment in response to the matrix was submitted and that was from Gary Wockner arguing for more concern for the environment (below). Regardless, the massively controversial water storage scheme, NISP, was added to the combined plan.

"It is astounding that the matrix the public was asked to comment on in Larimer County was dramatically different than the combined plan submitted to the Governor," said Wockner. "NISP is a massively controversial issue that was inserted behind the public's back with no notification. This is not 'bottom up' - this process and this northern Colorado plan did not represent the citizens of Larimer County."

NISP is already over 5 years late and at least \$150 million over budget. NISP will likely require small towns to take on hundreds of millions of dollars in debt, will help dry up thousands of acres of farms, and will drain and destroy the Poudre River. In January of 2011, the Supplemental DEIS was postponed for the third time as the Army Corp of Engineers completely rewrites the massive document. Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper opposes NISP and has proposed a "Healthy Rivers Alternative" to the project. This Alternative would be cheaper, better for farms, better for the river, and could be implemented faster than NISP. The summary of the Alternative is here: http://poudriver.home.comcast.net/~poudriver/Healthy_Rivers_Alternative.pdf

Email inviting the public to comment about Larimer County matrix and Gary Wockner's input (bottom to top):

----- Original Message -----

Subject:Economic Goals and Initiatives matrix for Larimer County

Date:Thu, 28 Apr 2011 14:29:29 -0600

From:Gary Wockner <garywockner@comcast.net>

To:lancasft@co.larimer.co.us

CC:degravcl@co.larimer.co.us, bocc@larimer.org, cityleaders@fcgov.com

Hello Mr. Lancaster,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your "Economic Matrix" for Larimer County (attached) that will be submitted to Governor Hickenlooper. There's much good work in here that I won't comment on -- thank you for your work! I would like to take the opportunity to comment on a few shortcomings that could be improved.

1. Goal #1 spends a lot of time talking about attracting jobs and employers. This is a good goal. In addition, we need to be careful that it is not construed as a goal of simply attracting more population growth. I encourage you to add to this goal by explaining that the desire to add more jobs and employers is so that the current residents of Larimer County can become fully and gainfully employed. Our unemployment rate is a problem that can be addressed by attracting more jobs and employers -- it should be our county's first priority to educate and employ the taxpaying citizens who already live here.

2. Goal #3 has some very dangerous wording about benchmarking our regulatory environment so that Larimer County can be globally competitive. This could be construed as meaning that we should decrease environmental regulations equivalent to those in countries where regulations are extremely lax and cause extraordinary harm to human health and the environment. I strongly suspect that your team did not mean to suggest this. So, please consider rewording this goal so that it does not suggest a reduction in regulations, but rather ensures regulatory protections for human health and environment to protect the citizens, environment, and businesses of Larimer County. Our great protections for our environmental quality of life in Larimer County is one of the consistently mentioned reasons why employers locate and expand here. Let's keep our regulatory protections top notch!

3. Please correct me if I am wrong, but there is no mention of protecting the environment as an economic goal anywhere in your matrix. (Please correct me if I overlooked it or somehow mis-read your matrix.) This seems like an absolutely stunning omission! My goodness! Larimer County has a national park, state parks, wilderness areas, state wildlife areas, nearly a million acres of U.S. Forest Service land, and the only National and Wild Scenic River in the state of Colorado -- the Cache la Poudre. In addition, rafting on the Cache la Poudre River was the driving-force tourist attraction for Fort Collins in 2010:

<http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20110415/BUSINESS/104150324/Summer-visitation-increase-city>

I am stunned and deeply concerned that your matrix does not mention that protecting all of these extraordinary natural resources is a huge driver of the economy in Larimer County. I suggest that you create another goal -- Goal #1 -- which is "Protect, enhance, and promote the environment of Larimer County as a key ingredient of economic success." Please contact me -- I am happy to help you put that goal together. Let's address this omission quickly so that Governor Hickenlooper does not get the wrong impression about our economic opportunities and priorities in Larimer County. Again, please contact me -- I am happy to attend the meeting on May 4th to help.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input into your matrix. Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,

Gary Wockner
Citizen, Fort Collins
970-218-8310

-----Original Message-----

From: Frank Lancaster [<mailto:lancasft@co.larimer.co.us>]

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2011 11:05 AM

To: Bill Cahill; DARIN ATTEBERRY; Jacquie Halburnt; Kelly Arnold; Larry Lorentzen; Mike Hart; Roy Lauricello-Town Manager Johnstown; Sherri Wagner; Lew Gaiter III; sue@7genllc.com; STEVE JOHNSON; Tom Donnelly; Barbara Koelzer; jsnicholas2@hotmail.com; tgos@comcast.net;

marilu_deleon@comcast.net; Mayor@ci.loveland; colemari@co.larimer.co.us;
palmerti@co.larimer.co.us; Alexis Smith; ANDY PARATORE; BEV MILLER; BILL
NELSON; BOB KEISTER; CAROL BLOCK; DENI LA RUE; Dianne Fairman; DONNA HART;
Gary Darling; George Hass; Irene Josey; Jeannine Haag; John Manago; JONI
FRIEDMAN; Linda Coxen; Linda Hoffmann; Lorenda Volker; MARC ENGEMOEN; NEIL
GLUCKMAN; NICK CHRISTENSEN; Ron Kerr; Sherrie Swisher
Cc: Cheryl Degrave
Subject: Economic Goals and Initiatives matrix for Larimer County

Attached is the draft of the Economic Matrix that the Larimer County team of 4 has prepared in response to the request for input from the Governor. The team used the input from the meeting on the 24th and the Bottom Up survey of Larimer County residents. The Team will be meeting with the Weld county team next Wednesday to produce the regional matrix and to turn the matrix over to the State office of Economic Development. I will be out of town for the next week, so please send any comments you have on the matrix to Cheryl Degrave (degravcl@co.larimer.co.us) with the Larimer County Workforce Center. Cheryl will forward your comments on to the four members of the team for consideration prior to their meeting on the 4th. Please feel free to distribute this matrix as you deem appropriate, but please ask that comments be sent in asap as the timeline is very tight.

Thanks,

Frank Lancaster
Larimer Co. Manager

Larimer County Economic Team
Don Taranto, business rep
Don Sandoval, state rep
Don Churchwell, Econ Dev rep
Lew Gaiter, elected official

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Gary Wockner, PhD, Director
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Gary Wockner, PhD, Director
Save The Poudre Coalition: Poudre Waterkeeper

Fort Collins, Colorado
<http://savethepoudre.org>
970-218-8310

Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper is a coalition of 20 national, state, and regional groups including: Waterkeeper Alliance, National Wildlife Federation, Clean Water Action, River Network Wild Earth Guardians, the Xerces Society, Defenders of Wildlife, American Rivers, American Whitewater Association, Western Resource Advocates, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Lighthawk, Environment Colorado, Sierra Club – Rocky Mountain Chapter, Fort Collins Audubon Society, Citizen Planners, Wolverine Farm Publishing, Poudre Paddlers, Friends of the Poudre, and the Cache la Poudre River Foundation. Membership in these groups totals over 3 million American citizens.