



COLORADO

Department of Natural Resources

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Colorado Water Conservation Board Releases New Analysis on Impacts of Climate Change, Population Growth on Future Water Supplies

The Colorado Water Conservation Board released today an [Analysis and Technical update to the Colorado Water Plan](#), a new state of the art analysis and modern scenario planning approach to help determine future water supply needs across Colorado.

Over the past decade, Colorado has experienced severe drought, extreme flooding, an increasing population, and a variable economy. For Colorado water officials these events present unique problems when planning for Colorado's water future. To help meet these challenges, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is releasing a state of the art Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan (formerly known as the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI)) to provide better planning and data on potential future water supply and demands for Colorado.

"Throughout Colorado we know our climate is changing, demands on our water increasing and our population is estimated to continue to grow," said Dan Gibbs, Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources. "This Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan provides state of the art modeling tools and new data to help our local water basins, elected officials and other stakeholders in Colorado make more informed decisions about Colorado's water future."

As the first water supply analysis done within the context of the Water Plan, the Technical Update estimates future available water supplies and gaps under five planning scenarios described in the Water Plan. These planning scenarios incorporate water supply and demand drivers associated with the potential effects of climate change, population growth, and economic factors.

Key statewide results include findings across the agricultural and municipal and industrial sectors as well as findings related to environmental and recreational assets. Based on the range of scenarios, the state faces a municipal and industrial gap between 250,000 to 750,000 acre-feet by 2050. Overall, this is a similar gap as presented in the Colorado Water Plan, but the new projections offer a more informed and refined approach. Population growth projections for the year 2050 are lower from projected levels in the Colorado Water Plan as well as statewide per capita demand, which has decreased nearly five percent between 2008 and 2015. Major drivers affecting the water supply gap include population growth, storage operations, and climate change.

Releasing the Technical Update is the first step in the cyclical process leading to an update of the Colorado Water Plan. The next step is for each basin roundtable to incorporate this new data into their Basin Implementation Plans and work to identify projects that address gaps and other priority

basin needs. Updated Basin Implementation Plans will then lead into a comprehensive update of the Colorado Water Plan by November 2022, the seven year anniversary of the plan.

“This analysis represents a multi-year effort by our staff and technical teams that modernizes our approach to water supply planning in Colorado,” said Rebecca Mitchell, Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board. “This new data will greatly assist our Basin Implementation Plans, which are the primary drivers of water projects and planning needs in Colorado, in their efforts to address our future water supply gaps and challenges across Colorado.”

[Click here for a copy of the Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan and its supporting documents.](#)

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