GUIDELINES ON WATER

Background

1. As La Plata County's population continues to grow, ever-increasing demands on available water resources will occur.

2. Water resources represent an essential component of the economic, social and environmental quality of life.

3. The preservation and protection of private ownership and the right to use water, its conservation, and its wise use are necessary to preserve the public health, safety and welfare of the citizens.

4. Seventy percent of the state's water supply is found in western Colorado. As western Colorado continues to grow, maintaining sufficient water supplies for current and future use is of crucial importance. Furthermore, industries in western Colorado such as agriculture, small businesses, tourism and natural resource development require steady, reliable, and high- quality water supplies.

5. The Colorado River within its basin is fully appropriated. Any future out of basin water resources would be a reallocation of the resource.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Local water conservation efforts.

2. The concept of comprehensive watershed management as well as realistic and cost-effective programs designed to control further pollution or contamination of Colorado water supported by water quality standards that are based on factual information and supportive data.

3. Programs and educational information promoting conservation, use and storage of water for Colorado's current and future needs.

4. The repair and improvement of existing water storage and transmission facilities/infrastructure as needed statewide.

5. Preservation of Colorado's water entitlements under interstate compacts and the protection of the state's prior appropriation doctrine.

6. Having the State of Colorado and appropriate entities participate to provide necessary water and financial support for the endangered fish recovery programs.

7. The concept that no local entity should be forced to relinquish water sources for endangered species without adequate mitigation and compensation.

8. That any reallocation must satisfactorily address concerns brought forward by the basin of origin.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. The continued depletion of western Colorado's water resources without mitigation, unless it is determined to be satisfactory to the water users in the donor basin of origin.

2. Any water policy actions that would diminish local government planning powers (e.g. 1041 powers).

3. Any federal action that would impair, diminish or divest any water right determined under the Constitution and laws of the state of Colorado.

4. Any federal actions contrary to Colorado Water Law.

5. Any water projects incorporating transfers of western Colorado water that diminish the quality of water in western Colorado.