

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 6018

A RESOLUTION requesting the federal government address water quality issues in the Arkansas River Basin in Southeast Colorado and Southwest Kansas and the prevalence of radionuclides in the waters of the Arkansas River Basin.

WHEREAS, The waters of the Arkansas River are declining in quality, due to naturally occurring sources that are exacerbated by irrigation and return flow practices concentrated in the Arkansas River Valley, east of Pueblo, Colorado; and

WHEREAS, In each of the last two years, approximately 10 tons of uranium have been delivered in downstream river flows from Colorado to groundwater in Southwest Kansas. The affected region in Kansas includes Hamilton, Kearny, and Finney counties; and

WHEREAS, Affected communities in Colorado and Kansas require assistance to remedy decades of poor water quality, which continues to worsen; and

WHEREAS, Federal standards on safe drinking water are intended to protect the health and safety of the public. Accordingly, it is within the interest of the federal government to partner with state and local water providers to develop remedies for the Basin; and

WHEREAS, Public assistance is vital to providing safe drinking water to Kansans in the Basin, whose water supply is currently contaminated in affected communities and is threatened to be contaminated in other communities by naturally occurring radionuclides beyond the standards established by the Safe Drinking Water Act, public law 93-523; and

WHEREAS, Without additional funding, Kansas' affected communities cannot develop water management practices and necessary infrastructure to address the water quality concerns; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has an established interest in providing alternative fresh water sources to portions of the affected Basin in Colorado. Currently, efforts are underway to accomplish this goal; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation completed an Upper Arkansas River Basin Public Water Supply Alternatives Viability Analysis of Water Supply Alternatives for Hamilton, Kearny, and Finney counties in Kansas. The analysis addressed water quality and availability in the Basin and identified alternatives, including the regionalization of supply pipeline alternatives. However, such supply pipeline alternatives are largely unaffordable due to participants' inability to cover construction costs; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation completed an Arkansas Basin from John Martin Reservoir to Garden City, Kansas, Final Plan of Study, acknowledging the shared water quality problems in Colorado and Kansas: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas: That the State of Kansas hereby requests that the Kansas congressional delegation work with the U.S. Congress to provide funding and direction to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to implement the efforts identified in the 2014 and 2015 studies, including, but not limited to:

1. Further compiling information on existing, usable sources, and projected demands;
2. developing Basin tools, including scientifically defensible hydrologic and economic modeling tools;
3. completing system reliability and impact analyses to assess the current

and future capability of existing natural and manmade infrastructure and operations to meet demands and useable water supply challenges;

4. identifying adaptation strategies to improve operations and infrastructure and to address current and future water availability and quality challenges in the Basin; and

5. developing recommendations to address the water quality challenges and to provide reliable, clean sources of drinking water in the affected areas of the Basin; and

Be it further resolved: That we request the Kansas Water Office, Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3, and other state and local partners in Kansas and Colorado to work with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to complete these tasks and to address the concerns regarding the contamination of the Arkansas River Basin.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the HOUSE, and was adopted by that body

Speaker of the House.

Chief Clerk of the House.