

## **Addressing Water Quality Issues in the Arkansas River Basin; HR 6018 and SR 1729**

**HR 6018 and SR 1729** make several findings concerning contamination of the Arkansas River Basin (Basin) by naturally occurring radiation-emitting radionuclides. Among the findings of the resolutions are the following:

- In each of the last two years, approximately ten 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;
- Affected communities in Colorado and Kansas require assistance to remedy decades of poor water quality, which continues to worsen;
- 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;
- Without additional funding, Kansas' affected communities cannot develop water management practices and necessary infrastructure to address the water quality concerns;
- The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) has an established interest in providing alternative fresh water sources to portions of the affected Basin in Colorado. Currently, efforts are under way to accomplish this goal; and
- The Bureau 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.

The resolutions request the Kansas congressional delegation work with the U.S. Congress to provide the Bureau with the funding and direction necessary to implement the measures identified in the Bureau studies. These include, but are not limited to:

- Further compiling information on existing, usable sources and project demands;
- Developing Basin tools, including scientifically defensible hydrologic and economic modeling tools;
- Completing system reliability and impact analyses to assess the current and future capability of existing natural and man-made infrastructure and operations to meet demands and useable water supply challenges;

- Identifying adaptation strategies to improve operations and infrastructure and to address current and future water availability and quality challenges in the Basin; and
- Developing recommendations to address the water quality challenges and to provide reliable, clean sources of drinking water in the affected areas of the Basin.

The resolutions further request the Kansas Water Office, the Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3, and other state and local partners in Kansas and Colorado work with the Bureau to complete these tasks and to address the concerns regarding the contamination of the Basin.

The resolutions also direct the Chief Clerk of the Kansas House of Representatives to send enrolled copies to the following: Kansas Governor Laura Kelly, each member of Kansas' congressional delegation, the Kansas Water Office, Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3, the Arkansas River Compact Administration, the Bureau, and the current U.S. Secretary of the Interior.