

House Resolution No. 6018

By Committee on Agriculture

3-19

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

33 WHEREAS, In 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation completed an
34 Upper Arkansas River Basin Public Water Supply Alternatives Viability
35 Analysis of Water Supply Alternatives for Hamilton, Kearny, and Finney
36 counties in Kansas. The analysis addressed water quality and availability

1 in the Basin and identified alternatives, including the regionalization of
2 supply pipeline alternatives. However, such supply pipeline alternatives
3 are largely unaffordable due to participants' inability to cover
4 construction costs; and

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

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

- 14 1. Further compiling information on existing, usable sources, and
15 projected demands;
- 16 2. developing Basin tools, including scientifically defensible
17 hydrologic and economic modeling tools;
- 18 3. completing system reliability and impact analyses to assess the
19 current and future capability of existing natural and manmade
20 infrastructure and operations to meet demands and useable water
21 supply challenges;
- 22 4. identifying adaptation strategies to improve operations and
23 infrastructure and to address current and future water availability
24 and quality challenges in the Basin; and
- 25 5. developing recommendations to address the water quality
26 challenges and to provide reliable, clean sources of drinking water
27 in the affected areas of the Basin; and

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

33 *Be it further resolved:* That the Chief Clerk of the House of
34 Representatives shall send enrolled copies of this resolution to Kansas
35 Governor Laura Kelly, each member of Kansas' congressional delegation,
36 the Kansas Water Office, Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management
37 District No. 3, the Arkansas River Compact Administration, the U.S.
38 Bureau of Reclamation, and the current U.S. Secretary of the Interior.