
Fort Collins Opposes NISP, Slams Environmental Study

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City Opposes NISP, Slams EIS

Given the proposed Glade Reservoir's potential impacts to Fort Collins' drinking water supply, economy, recreation and environment, a unified City Council on Tuesday decided to slam an initial study of the project and voice its official opposition.

On a 6-0 vote, with Councilman Wade Troxell absent because he is on vacation, the council adopted a resolution opposing the Northern Integrated Supply Project, which would divert water from the Cache la Poudre River in summer months.

City staff spent months and nearly \$700,000 studying the Army Corps of Engineers' draft environmental impact statement about the project, and concluded it contained several errors and omissions and was "substantially deficient."

Among several points raised Tuesday night, council heard that the EIS doesn't address the 223 species of birds found on the river corridor; that it does not fully address the potential economic impacts of a less-full river; that it excludes the city's largest wastewater reclamation facility from its analysis; and that it neglects to note upgrades to that system and another one on Mulberry Street could cost Fort Collins between \$75 million and \$125 million.

City Manager Darin Atteberry said before the vote that the point was to allow the city to comment on the plan, which would affect Fort Collins despite the city's own lack of involvement.

"We were really disappointed in the quality of the analysis, as a staff," he said. "We had to look at the EIS in the interests of Fort Collins."

Fort Collins is not part of NISP, which includes Glade Reservoir and a companion reservoir in Galeton that would provide enough water for 80,000 new homes on the northern Front Range. If built, Glade would require the relocation of much of U.S. 287 north of Ted's Place.

Atteberry wouldn't comment on any legal options that could allow the city to fight the project.

But Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Ohlson said he was committed to stopping it, a sentiment shared by several environmental and conservation groups in town.

Gary Wockner, spokesman for the umbrella Save the Poudre Coalition, said the vote was a victory for the region and for Colorado.

"This unanimous vote means that sound science still matters," he said in a statement.

Brian Werner, spokesman for the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, whose member communities hope to build NISP, has said the participant communities would work with Fort Collins and other entities to address their concerns.

Larimer County Commissioners are expected to formalize their position on NISP at a meeting next Tuesday.

The period to comment on the plan expires Saturday, Sept. 13.

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