



WESTERN RESOURCE
ADVOCATES

For Immediate Release
Contact: Peter Roessmann
Ph.: 303.444.1188, x221

February 22, 2010

Cost of Water From Million Pipeline Would Be Too Much for Customers
“Letters of Interest” Fail to Provide Binding Commitments

GREEN RIVER, WY – In a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Western Resource Advocates (WRA) reveals that water from Aaron Million’s proposed water pipeline project would be too expensive for customers. The letter also asserts that there is no need for the project’s extremely costly water and that the Corps should end its review of the project.

The Regional Water Supply Project pipeline, whose design is still in progress, would be among the largest water projects in the nation and attempt to move 250,000 acre-feet of water 500-600 miles from southwestern Wyoming to Colorado’s Front Range.

Last month, Million, the proponent of the pipeline, submitted letters of interest to the Corps as proof of customers who would buy project water. WRA suggests these farmers and municipalities are unaware of and likely unable to pay what the project’s water will cost.

In a study of a similar proposal, the Colorado Water Conservation Board estimated a project price tag of over **\$7 billion**, with annual operating costs of over **\$123 million**. Under these assumptions, water produced by the project would cost at least **\$2,200 per acre-foot/year** – far more expensive than other sources of supply for Front Range farmers and cities and well beyond the means of most water users to pay. As an example, for the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District to obtain the 150,000 acre-feet it suggests it might need, it would cost over **\$330 million each year**.

“It is doubtful in the extreme that farmers and municipalities could support the pipeline’s multi-billion dollar cost,” said WRA water program director Bart Miller. “Put bluntly, water for Colorado crops and communities can be obtained less expensively.”

Water from the pipeline would be about three times more expensive than current market rates and is non-competitive with other water projects currently under development. This likely explains why the letters submitted by Million put a disclaimer on their interest until price and terms are understood.

Million’s inability to secure firm commitments is among a number of other serious flaws bedeviling the proposed project.

COLORADO • 2260 Baseline Road, Suite 200 • Boulder, CO 80302 • 303.444.1188 • Fax: 303.786.8054 • Email: info@westernresources.org
NEVADA • 204 N. Minnesota Street, Suite A • Carson City, NV 89703 • 775.841.2400 • Fax: 866.223.8365 • Email: info@westernresources.org
NEW MEXICO • 227 E. Palace Avenue, Suite M • Santa Fe, NM 87501 • 505.820.1590 • Fax: 505.820.1589 • Email: info@westernresources.org
UTAH • 150 South 600 East, Suite 2AB • Salt Lake City, UT 84102 • 801.487.9911 • Email: utah@westernresources.org

- ✓ The pipeline's for-profit model seriously challenges Colorado water law forbidding speculation on water resources.
- ✓ It is uncertain whether the amount of water Million hopes to move will be physically available in the Green River.
- ✓ The pipeline's proposed massive diversions could push Colorado to the limit of its share of water from the greater Colorado River basin and thereby trigger water conflicts among the seven states that rely on the Colorado River.

A wall of opposition has formed against the project, uniting water providers, communities, sportsmen, ranchers, and others who feel the pipeline should never leave the drawing board.

###

Western Resource Advocates is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to protecting the West's land, air and water. Visit us online at www.westernresourceadvocates.org.