



## Gilpin County Colorado

### Commissioners

Ron Engels, District 1  
Linda Isenhardt, District 2  
Gail Watson, District 3

### County Manager

Abel Montoya

### County Attorney

Bradford Benning

Located in the Historic  
Gilpin County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 366  
203 Eureka Street  
Central City, Colorado  
80427

303.582.5214  
303.582.5440 fax

Web Site  
[www.gilpincounty.org](http://www.gilpincounty.org)

Facebook  
Gilpin County Colorado

Twitter  
@GilpinCounty

December 17, 2020

**TO: Denver Water, Boulder County Board of County Commissioners, City of Boulder, Nederland, Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; City of Black Hawk, City of Central, Golden; and CDOT.**

### **RE: Gross Reservoir Expansion Project ("Project") – Impacts**

The Gilpin County Board of County Commissioners ("Board") expresses their opposition to the Gross Reservoir Expansion Project ("Project"). Impacts on Gilpin County and other eastern slope communities have not been adequately considered and addressed. The Board respectfully requests that the Boulder County Board of County Commissioners and Denver Water not proceed with the Gross Reservoir Expansion Project as currently proposed until Gilpin County, Denver Water, and the above-addressed jurisdictions meet to discuss and address the concerns and serious impacts from the Project. This discussion is necessary to provide a fair and objective review and resolution of the concerns Gilpin County and other impacted communities have related to this Project. Here are a few of the Project impacts that need to be considered and addressed:

- **Environmental Impacts.** The removal of 600,000 trees, creating a new quarry site, and building an enlarged dam is an ecological disaster for this area. We do not believe the Project should be approved but at the very least a new Environmental Impact Statement should be required.
- **Wildlife Impacts.** The headwaters for South Boulder Creek are located in Gilpin County and the channelization of this creek for the purpose of filling Gross Reservoir in the 1950's is visible to this day. We are concerned about the loss of fish habitat that will occur when maximum water flows are needed to fill the proposed enlarged reservoir.
- **Sustainability and Conservation.** Water conservation rather than expansion was not considered as a viable alternative to the expansion Project. Beautiful forests and treasured wilderness and environmental areas should not be sacrificed to perpetuate continued non-sustainable water use and inefficient water irrigation practices in metropolitan areas and elsewhere. Colorado has a semi-arid climate and is considered a high dessert. We need to adjust to that reality with our water practices and become champions of water conservation.
- **Traffic Impacts.** As currently proposed, Gilpin County's most used and relied on county-wide roadway, SH 119, will see the addition of at least 36 heavy trucks per day hauling tree materials from the Project through Gilpin County. SH 119, which is west of Gross Reservoir and runs south from the Nederland area through Gilpin County, is a two-lane road through an historic and scenic natural area, specifically the Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway. SH 119 also serves as a major access point for Gilpin County citizens, businesses and employees as well as visitors seeking to enjoy the businesses and beauty of Gilpin County. SH 119 is also the only highway that traverses the entire County, serving as a gateway to the County from both the north and south of the County.

US 6, part of the Project's planned SH 119 route for transport of tree removal material, serves many Gilpin County residents, businesses, and visitors as they travel to Gilpin County and others heading west to or east from I-70. US 6 is also already overburdened with heavy truck traffic from the Frei Quarry located along US 6. Additionally, US 6 and SH 119 serve as a major route for the millions of visitors for the recreation opportunities in Gilpin County including the casinos, which generate significant revenue for the County and the State.

We are also concerned about impacts to other roads serving Gilpin County. Coal Creek Canyon (CO 72) is the state highway that serves many of our residents in northern Gilpin County. The impact that construction and logging trucks will have on this curvy mountain road is so extreme that it will create dangerous conditions for residents commuting to work or to services below.

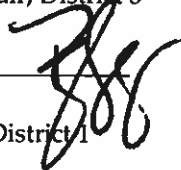
It appears other more direct, shorter, safer, faster, less costly, less polluting, wider (multiple lanes per direction) and more eco-friendly routes are available for transporting tree materials from the Project. As presently proposed, 15 percent of truck traffic hauling tree materials destined for Longmont will travel an additional 90 miles, approximately 30 miles of which is through Gilpin County, to avoid a direct route to the north through Boulder. Additionally, the Union Pacific's Moffat Tunnel Subdivision rail line appears to be a possible alternative. UP's Moffat Tunnel Subdivision line travels west from Denver and comes very near Gross Reservoir where it crosses and is accessible from Gross Dam Road. This rail line also travels close to SH 72 and SH 93 and crosses those highways at various locations providing additional access points for transferring tree and other materials for transport south or north on SH 93, or to I-70, or for taking materials and equipment to Gross Reservoir.


We understand this proposed Project will impact several communities. We look forward to discussing all of these issues so that impacts are fairly and effectively addressed.

Sincerely,

**Gilpin County Board of County Commissioners**

  
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Gail Watson, Chair, District 3

  
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Ron Engels,  
Commissioner, District 1

  
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Linda Iserhart,  
Commissioner, District 2