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Colorado, Kansas & Nebraska Water Agreement

Today, the states of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska have reached an agreement that will ensure more certainty to the basin's water users in both Nebraska and Kansas. The agreement, in the form of a Resolution approved by the Republican River Compact Administration (RRCA), was achieved through collaborative negotiations that began in April 2015 and will provide timely notice and access to water for the 2016 irrigation season.

The agreement provides additional flexibility for Nebraska to achieve its Compact obligations while ensuring that the interests of Kansas are protected. The additional flexibility will allow the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources to provide a portion of the forecasted compliance water early in 2016 and provide any additional shortfall later in 2016 and through April 1, 2017. This also provides some improved operational predictability for Nebraska water users in that water users will not be subjected to closing notices related to the 2016 irrigation season.

The 2016 agreement builds upon the agreement reached for the 2015 irrigation season with further beneficial developments for water users. This agreement provides more advanced notice to irrigators in the basin of compliance activities that will likely occur in 2016, allowing for an advanced planning period producers desire for their efficiently run operations.

The States' agreement is contingent upon the Nebraska and the Kansas Bostwick Irrigation Districts, working with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, – reaching agreement on modifications of certain contract provisions contained in their Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) also adopted last year. Thus, ensuring the availability of the water pumped from Nebraska augmentation projects for RRCA compliance.

Current RRCA Chairman, Gordon W. "Jeff" Fassett, Director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, said, "Today's agreement is good news for Nebraska water users and represents the continuation of the cooperative and positive collaboration we've fostered between our states as we work to find mutually agreeable solutions that best serve our citizens. Additionally, we are hopeful that this positive momentum will continue to move us closer to the goal of securing a long-term agreement. With significantly more planning time, Nebraska's water users will have greater certainty in their water supply and make the best decisions for their operations."

"We are pleased to collaborate with Nebraska and Colorado as we continue to develop balanced and fair water solutions benefiting all of the basin's water users that reflects good water management," said Kansas Commissioner David Barfield. "This fourth in our series of recent agreements with Nebraska allows Kansas to make effective use of its water supply in 2016 and allows the states additional time and experience with Nebraska's compliance activities as we continue to move toward long-term agreement."



Colorado Commissioner Dick Wolfe said, “This agreement exemplifies the success that can be achieved through collaboration and cooperation of the RRCA and the water users in the basin.”

The RRCA is comprised of one member each from the States of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. The purpose of the RRCA is to administer the Republican River Compact. This Compact allocates the waters of the Republican River among the three states. The next RRCA annual meeting is scheduled for August of 2016 and will be hosted by the State of Colorado in a location of their choice.