

Yampa/White/Green Basin Roundtable Demand Management Statement

Executive Summary

Context

In the face of persistent drought and anticipated long-term growth in demand for water, Colorado and the other six Colorado River Basin states have prepared a Drought Contingency Plan (DCP). One element of that plan is to investigate the feasibility of Demand Management (DM). If implemented, DM will become a future program which, on a voluntary, temporary, and compensated basis, will reduce water use by individual, public, and commercial water rights holders, to avoid administration of the Colorado River Compact on the Colorado River.

Statement of Principles

Given the context for DM in Colorado, the Yampa/White/Green River Basin Roundtable considers the following concepts to be important in the development of a DM program:

1. **Preservation of Quality of Life in the Y/W/G River Basin:** Any DM program must preserve and enhance all aspects of quality of life in our basin, including agriculture, local communities, and local economies, while protecting municipal delivery, addressing environmental needs as well as recreational water use, and offering locally-accepted methods to reduce consumptive use without injury.
2. **Equity of Responsibility and Opportunity:** A DM program must be structured to ensure that no river basin nor single water user group (i.e, Ag, M&I) bears a disproportionate share of DM responsibility, and to provide opportunities for all water right holders to participate on a reasonably-equitable basis. To ensure equity, some form of inter-basin apportionment is required.
3. **Guided Market:** The State of Colorado should establish a marketplace for DM water transactions that is equitable and transparent.
4. **Rural Communities:** Any DM program must evaluate and address all impacts that could result to rural communities, including negative economic, cultural, or social impacts.
5. **Recreation and Environment:** Any DM program must consider/analyze its impacts on environmental and recreational needs, including those resulting from changes in water supply and/or timing of flows. Any DM program should strive to benefit, and must not adversely impact, environmental and recreational water uses and their contributions to local economies.
6. **Compensation for Value of Water Conserved:** Any DM program must fairly compensate participants. Compensation should be based on all economic impacts to the participant and not solely on the loss of income from the crop or product not produced.
7. **Trans-Mountain Diversions (TMDs):** Basins which benefit from water diverted from the Upper Colorado River must be considered as part of the CRS, with applicable DM responsibilities and opportunities, and subject to equitable apportionment for DM purposes. Any DM program must prohibit trans-mountain diverters from purchasing Western Slope water to meet a DM responsibility.